UNITED NATIONS

DP

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1996/17
12 April 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Annual session 1996
6-17 May 1996, Geneva

REPORT ON THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION

NEW YORK, 25-29 MARCH 1996

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS	3
	UNFPA segment	
II.	UNFPA: STRATEGY FOR ALLOCATION OF UNFPA RESOURCES	6
III.	UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS	9
IV.	UNFPA: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNFPA PUBLICATIONS PROGRAMME	16
V.	UNFPA: ROLE OF UNFPA IN ASSESSING AND MEETING CONTRACEPTIVE REQUIREMENTS AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT NEEDS	20
VI.	UNFPA: MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNICEF/WHO JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY	21
	UNDP/UNFPA joint segment	
VII.	UNDP/UNFPA: HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS	23
VIII.	UNDP/UNFPA: THE JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)	25
	UNDP segment	
IX.	UNDP: AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS	29

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CONTENTS (continued)

Chapter		Page
X.	UNDP: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS: REPORTS ON MID-TERM REVIEWS	33
XI.	UNDP: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS	41
XII.	UNDP: EVALUATION	45
XIII.	UNDP: ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE	51
XIV.	OTHER MATTERS	54
Annex.	Allocation of subjects for future sessions	63

DECISIONS ADOPTED

Number		
96/13.	Future country programming process of the United Nations Population Fund	11
96/14.	Role of the United Nations Population Fund in assessing and meeting contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs	21
96/15.	Allocation of resources to country programmes of the United Nations Population Fund	8
96/16.	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)	29
96/17.	Inter-agency coordination in health policy and programming	22
96/18.	Publications programme of the United Nations Population Fund	19
96/19.	Programme of assistance to the Palestinian people	53
96/20.	UNDP evaluation	50
96/21.	UNDP: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters	44
96/22.	UNDP communication and information programme	59
96/23.	Agency support costs	33
96/24.	Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its second regular session 1996	59

I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. The President, H.E. Mrs. Annette des Iles (Trinidad and Tobago), opened the second regular session 1996 of the Executive Board. She assured the Board that the Bureau would continue to do its best to assist the members in reaching consensus on the various issues that would be brought up during the session. She informed the Executive Board that Mr. Humphrey B. Kunda, Deputy Permanent Representative of Zambia, would represent Mr. Bruce Namakando (Zambia) as Vice-President of the Board for the present session.

2. She informed the Executive Board that the Bureau had met three times, on 26 and 27 February and 25 March. The Bureau had met with members of Management System International, the consulting firm selected to undertake the external evaluation of UNIFEM, called for by the Executive Board in its decision 95/32. The firm had asked for the meeting with the Bureau to clarify aspects of the terms of reference contained in that decision. At its 27 February meeting, the Bureau endorsed the composition of its working group on documentation, established by Executive Board decision 96/6. The group was composed of representatives proposed by linguistic groups and of the secretariats of UNDP, UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Office of Conference Services. The list of members had been distributed to the Board. The working group had met twice and would report regularly to the Bureau on its progress and at the annual session 1996. The Bureau had also reviewed the agenda for the current session and made a number of proposals regarding the work plan, which had been presented at the informal pre-session meeting on 11 March.

3. The Secretary of the Executive Board informed the meeting that owing to the financial situation of the United Nations, pre-session documents that had already been distributed to the Permanent Missions would no longer be made available in multiple copies in the conference room. Reference copies for consultation would, however, be available in the document booth. In addition to that listed in DP/1996/L.6 and Corr.1, documentation for the session included: the report of the Administrative Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (DP/1996/25) and two conference room papers for consideration under item 11; and two conference room papers for consideration under item 12. All four conference room papers were available in the three working languages.

4. The Executive Board approved the following agenda for its second regular session, as contained in document DP/1996/L.6 and Corr.1:

Item 1. Organizational matters

<u>UNFPA segment</u>

Item 2. UNFPA: Strategy for allocation of UNFPA resources (96/4)

Item 3. UNFPA: Country programmes and related matters

Item 4. UNFPA: Effectiveness of the UNFPA publications programme (95/35)

Item 5. UNFPA: Role of UNFPA in assessing and meeting contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs (95/21)

Item 6. UNFPA: Membership in the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy (95/15)

UNFPA/UNDP joint segment

Item 7. UNFPA/UNDP: Harmonization of presentation of budget and accounts (oral report)

Item 8. UNFPA/UNDP: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNDP segment

Item 9. UNDP: Agency support costs

Item 10. UNDP: Country programmes and related matters (mid-term reviews)

Item 11. UNDP: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters: Follow-up to Executive Board decision 95/28 (paras. 14, 36, and 37)

Item 12. UNDP: Evaluation (92/2, para. 3)

Item 13. UNDP: Assistance to the Palestinian people (92/2, para. 3)

Item 14. Other matters (including report on field visit)

5. The Executive Board approved the work plan, contained in document DP/1995/L.6/Corr.1, as orally amended.

6. The Secretary informed the Executive Board that an informal briefing by the UNDP Resident Representative in Mozambique, in connection with consideration by the Executive Board of the country's mid-term review, would be held on 27 March.

7. The Executive Board approved the report of the first regular session 1996 (DP/1996/11).

Future sessions

8. The Secretary brought to the attention of the Executive Board the dates of future sessions and allocation of items contained in document DP/1996/L.6 as well as in the annotated agenda for the annual session 1996 (DP/1996/L.7), an advance copy of which had been distributed to Executive Board members. She noted that given the deadline of 18 March 1996 for submission of documentation for the annual session 1996, any changes made to the provisional agenda as a result of discussions at the current session would appear in a corrigendum to document DP/1996/L.7. In addition, the report of the second regular session 1996 would not be available in languages until the second week of the annual session, given its submission after the deadline.

9. The Secretary informed the Executive Board that the Bureau had proposed some changes to the work plan for the annual session 1996, contained in document DP/1996/L.7. The revisions included taking up item 9, United Nations Volunteers (UNV), on 10 May, so that it would directly precede the commemorative session of the twenty-fifth anniversary of UNV. The Bureau had also suggested that the Executive Board hold an informal discussion during the morning of 15 May 1996 with the Administrator on a topical theme of direct interest. It was noted that 16 May 1996 was a holiday in Switzerland.

10. One delegation requested that the Executive Board include for consideration under item 7 (annual report of the Administrator, including initiatives for change) of the agenda for the annual session 1996, the executive summary of the February 1996 report "Assessment of UNDP", prepared by the Governments of Denmark, India, Sweden and the United Kingdom. He explained that the report's findings were a contribution to the UNDP reform process. Another delegation thanked the Governments who had prepared the assessment.

11. One delegation requested the scheduling of a dialogue with selected UNFPA country representatives during the UNFPA segment of the annual session 1996. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) of UNFPA stated that UNFPA would consider the proposal, but noted that the Fund would not be submitting country programmes at the annual session. He pointed out that the UNFPA representatives could address issues raised in the context of the Executive Director's annual report, should such a dialogue be arranged.

12. One delegation, on behalf of others, requested consideration by the Executive Board at its annual session of the number of sessions held per year, stating that four sessions reduced the participation of many members and observers, particularly from developing countries, given the many other concurrent meetings that required coverage. Moreover, the frequent sessions created technical problems for the production of documentation by the Executive Board secretariat. He noted that the objective of the Executive Board was not to focus on itself, but to give guidance to UNDP and UNFPA country-level operations. It would be useful to discuss the matter of the number of sessions, together with spacing, streamlining of the agenda and other working methods. Several other delegations supported the proposal. One delegation suggested some measures aimed at increasing efficiency: discussion of country programmes on an exceptional basis; issuance of some documentation for information purposes only; and holding three sessions, with one extended session.

13. Another delegation, supported by others, expressed concern about the high cost involved for delegations from developing countries who were required to travel to Geneva to participate in the annual sessions held there every other year. He requested UNDP and UNFPA to consider financing the travel expenses of one representative of each delegation to the Executive Board from a developing country. Other delegations also requested a review of the venue of the annual session.

14. The Executive Board approved the following dates for future sessions:

Annual session 1996 (Geneva)	6-17 May 1996
Third regular session 1996	9-13 September 1996

15. The Executive Board approved the allocation of subjects as contained in document DP/1996/L.6, as orally amended.

16. The Executive Board approved the work plan contained in document DP/1996/L.7, as orally amended.

17. The Executive Board approved decision 96/24, an overview of decisions taken by the Board during the second regular session 1996.

UNFPA SEGMENT

II. STRATEGY FOR ALLOCATION OF UNFPA RESOURCES

18. The Executive Director introduced the report on a revised approach for the allocation of UNFPA resources to country programmes (DP/FPA/1996/15). The report was submitted in response to decision 96/10, in which the Executive Board requested the Executive Director to submit a revision of the proposed approach for the allocation of UNFPA resources at the Board's second regular session 1996 in order to reflect comments made by members during the first regular session 1996 on document DP/FPA/1996/1.

19. The Executive Director noted that the revised document still retained the principle of using the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) relating to reproductive health, infant and maternal mortality reduction and female education in categorizing countries for UNFPA assistance. Likewise, the same seven indicators and their threshold levels for the determination of three groups of countries had been retained. As before, the current proposal also gave special attention to the least developed countries, to low-income countries and to Africa.

20. A number of modifications had been introduced to take account of comments made during the previous session of the Executive Board. The criterion of per capita gross national product (GNP) of less than $750 had been strictly applied, in combination with the indicators for the ICPD goals, in defining countries belonging to Group A. Also, to respond to the call for flexibility, the document proposed bands for relative shares of resources for Groups A, B and C. Further, a number of qualitative and quantitative factors were proposed to distribute resources flexibly to individual countries within each category.

21. Numerous delegations welcomed the revised report and expressed their sense that the document addressed most of the issues that the Board had noted in the earlier version discussed at the previous session. Many felt that the introduction of bands for the relative allocation of resources among the three groups of countries was a wise one that reflected the flexibility needed to implement the new approach. The general feeling of the Board was that the

indicators used fairly represented the goals of the ICPD, while several delegations suggested that continuous support should be given to eventually introducing indicators that would better capture quality and accessibility of services. One delegation queried why the educational indicator used gross enrolment ratios rather than net enrolment ratios.

22. Much of the discussion revolved around the range of the bands for relative allocations to each group of countries. Some delegations favoured flexibility within groups of countries but not between groups. Others pointed out that for optimum use of the scarce resources of UNFPA, both inter- and intra-group flexibility were necessary. It was pointed out by some delegations that the band for Group A countries was broader than that for the other two groups, and the suggestion was made that reducing the range to 67-69 per cent would make the proposed allocation system more consistent internally.

23. With regard to the distribution of resources within each group to individual countries, delegations made a number of points. Several pointed out that commitment to meeting the goals of ICPD, evidenced for example by assigning domestic resources to population programmes as well as by having coherent national programmes, plans and strategies on population and development, were factors that should be considered. Disadvantaged sub-national areas that were not reflected in national-level averages should also be taken into account. Many delegations were also of the view that the level of development, as reflected for example by the GNP per capita or by poverty levels, was an important factor to be considered in allocating resources.

24. Some delegations noted the need to improve the terminology in a few places in the report. Thus, the term "population issues" should be preferred over "population problems". Consistency was also called for in referring to the African region as a whole rather than to "sub-Saharan Africa", following the language of Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/51. Other delegations noted that South-South cooperation should not be restricted to Group C countries.

25. In response to the many suggestions made, the Executive Director made several clarifications. She noted the wide agreement among members of the Board on the need for flexibility as well as on the general approach of basing allocations on how far countries were from reaching the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action. She stressed that there were ongoing efforts, fully supported by UNFPA, to develop more adequate indicators and that these would be phased in as soon as they became available. Referring to enrolment ratios, she acknowledged that net ratios would be preferable, but gross ratios had been used because of their wider availability. She also noted that all countries, regardless of grouping, could benefit from South-South cooperation and that the report perhaps could have been clearer in this regard.

26. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/15. Allocation of resources to country programmes of the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on a revised approach for the allocation of the resources of the United Nations Population Fund to country programmes (DP/FPA/1996/15) and of the comments made thereon by the Executive Board;

2. Reaffirms the commitments demonstrated by Member States in the context of adhering to the principles in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development;

3. Also reaffirms that, in order to achieve the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development, there is a need for adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels as well as of new and additional resources to developing countries from all sources, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources, and calls upon those countries in a position to do so to increase their contributions to the United Nations Population Fund;

4. Endorses the approach for resource allocation contained in the report, including the indicators and threshold levels towards meeting the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development for the year 2005;

5. Also endorses, in this context, the flexible approach to the allocation of relative shares of resources to the new categories of countries as well as to the distribution of resources to individual countries in line with the section of the report entitled "Distribution of resources to individual countries";

6. Decides that the United Nations Population Fund, while using this flexible approach, should give special attention to the least developed countries, low-income countries and Africa;

7. Also decides that the United Nations Population Fund in distributing resources to individual countries within each category should use per capita gross national product as a criterion as well as other appropriate indicators of the level of development of a country;

8. Further decides that the allocation of resources should be based on a comprehensive assessment of the actual needs and requirements of countries, and should take fully into consideration coherent national programmes, plans and strategies on population and development and the need for external resources to complement national financial efforts in the area of population and development;

9. Endorses the procedure for categorization of countries into Groups A, B and C as outlined in the report and approves the following relativ· shares of

resources: 67-69 per cent to Group A, 22-24 per cent to Group B, 5-7 per cent to Group C and 3-4 per cent to countries with economies in transition, on a temporary basis, and 0.5 per cent to other countries;

10. Recognizes that some countries may still continue to require programme support in selected thematic areas to assure that the gains already made are not compromised by adverse economic situations;

11. Also recognizes the need to address the problems of significant social sectors and areas not reflected in national average indicators;

12. Reaffirms that the United Nations Population Fund should continue to promote and strengthen South-South cooperation in all groups of countries, both within and between regions;

13. Recommends that the revised approach for resource allocation be introduced in a phased manner, taking into account both the stage of the current cycle of assistance and the status of programme implementation in individual countries;

14. Recommends that the Executive Director undertake a quinquennial review of the system for resource allocation, including a performance assessment of the indicators and their threshold levels, and to report thereon to the Executive Board starting in the year 2000;

15. Requests the Executive Director to provide information in the annual report of the Fund on the level of allocations and disbursements to the categories of countries in line with the revised approach, as well as information on the allocations and disbursements of resources to regions, least developed countries and low-income countries;

16. Also requests the United Nations Population Fund to continue the methodological work needed to further develop indicators for the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development that would be of practical value in serving to assist in allocating resources, including indicators measuring the integration of all components of reproductive health and family planning services.

27 March 1996

III. COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

27. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) made a short introductory statement on the UNFPA country programmes being presented at this session of the Board. Three new country programmes were being proposed for the sub-Saharan Africa region - Cape Verde (DP/FPA/CP/153), Chad (DP/FPA/CP/150) and Ghana (DP/FPA/CP/151). In addition, an extension of, and additional resources for, the country programme for Congo (DP/FPA/1996/16) was being requested. A similar request for the Burkina Faso programme had proven unnecessary, and the programme was being implemented through 1996 without any additional funding. Similarly, the programmes in Cameroon and Sao Tome and Principe were being extended through

1997 without any extra funding. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Fund was presenting a request for additional resources for the country programme for Bolivia (DP/FPA/1996/12). The country programme in Cuba, which had been extended through 1995, would be further extended until the end of 1996. This extension, which would require additional resources, would be presented for approval by the Board later in the year. Likewise, the programme for Mexico was being extended to the end of 1996, but no additional funding was required. The Board was being presented with a new country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic (DP/FPA/CP/152). The programme for Malaysia was being extended through the end of 1996 with no additional funding required. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) pointed out that many of these programmes were being extended in order to synchronize the UNFPA programming cycle with those of its partner agencies in the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP).

28. Several delegations wished to address common questions concerning all of the UNFPA country programmes. Speaking for a number of delegations, one delegation stated that it was felt that the presentation of the country programmes had become too uniform and that differences in the needs of individual countries did not stand out. The documents tended to give very similar lists of activities that would be carried out in each of the three core programme areas of the Fund. The strategy designed for the particular conditions of the country involved was often not clear. Delegates would prefer more explicit statements of the purpose of each programme and a discussion of the comparative advantage that UNFPA had in carrying out the proposed activities. It would also be desirable to have expected achievements spelled out along with the methods and indicators that would be used to monitor progress towards attaining those achievements.

29. In echoing those concerns, several delegations pointed out that the country programmes being presented at this session of the Board were the first ones to be developed since the ICPD. They wanted to be sure that the proposed programmes reflected the ICPD goals and that they fit within the proposed allocation of UNFPA resources that had just been presented to the Board. One delegation pointed out that several of the country programmes being presented at this session aimed at incorporating family planning services into existing primary health care services. This delegation emphasized that family planning should not be equated with reproductive health and wanted it to be clear that in the post-ICPD environment UNFPA should be operating within a broader reproductive health framework. Some of the delegations mentioned that there were a few discrepancies in the data presented in the proposed country programmes and emphasized that United Nations reports had to be especially careful in this regard.

30. In his reply, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) agreed with delegations that the presentation of country programmes needed to be more analytical and needed to show the comparative advantage of UNFPA in the areas in which it proposed to work. He stated that the integration of the ICPD goals into country-level activities was a major concern of UNFPA and work in this area was being carried out in several different arenas, especially in the terms of reference of the programme review and strategy development (PRSD) exercises that reviewed past programmes and developed new ones. In moving to a broader reproductive health approach, UNFPA was building on its ongoing work in the

field of family planning, which the Fund realized was only one, albeit a very important aspect of reproductive health. The re-direction of the programming activities of UNFPA was of necessity incremental but was considered to be an urgent priority. UNFPA regretted the discrepancies in data, acknowledging that obtaining reliable data in the field of reproductive health was often very difficult but that the Fund should be consistent in the data it presented.

31. The same delegation that had raised, on behalf of others, the questions about the presentation of UNFPA country programmes also brought to the attention of the Board the fact that the programming processes for UNICEF and UNDP had been changed in recent months. The changes were too new to ascertain whether the reforms were successful in achieving their desired results, and it was probably premature to call for similar revisions in the way the Board considered UNFPA country programmes. However, in view of the desire to harmonize the work of the three agencies, it would be advisable for the Fund to monitor these new developments and to report back to the Board on recommendations for a future country programming process. The representative of Denmark then proposed a draft decision to this effect.

32. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/13. Future country programming process of the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

1. Invites the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to consider ways of harmonizing the country programming process of the Fund with that of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund. In this context, the Executive Director should review the format for, content and timing of as well as the mode of discussion of the documentation submitted to the Executive Board on country activities;

2. Requests the Executive Director to submit to Member States, after consultations with the United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Children's Fund, recommendations on the future country programming process of the United Nations Population Fund based on the results of the above considerations and reviews, no later than at the annual session 1997 of the Executive Board.

26 March 1996

A. Africa Division

33. The Director of the Africa Division made a general introduction prior to the presentation of the new country programmes for Cape Verde, Chad and Ghana and the request for the extension of, and additional resources for, the country programme for Congo. With regard to the formulation of the new country programmes, the Director stressed the importance of Governments' having a sense of ownership of the PRSD process, through which the programmes in their

countries were developed. In all country programming activities, emphasis was being placed on the programme approach, on the three core programme areas endorsed by the Board after the ICPD, and on the harmonization of the programming cycles of United Nations agencies and organizations through the JCGP mechanism.

Assistance to the Government of Cape Verde (DP/FPA/CP/153)

34. The proposed third country programme (1996-2000) for Cape Verde was presented by the UNFPA Country Director for Cape Verde. He underscored the favourable and unfavourable conditions at the country level relating to the implementation of the objectives of the new country programme. Among the favourable conditions were the political will, the emergence of a civil society that could implement changes in the population sector, the formulation in 1995 of a national population policy and its associated action plan, the establishment of a parliamentary committee on population and development, the importance that national execution had played in the previous country programme, the fact that the country's contraceptive prevalence rate had already reached 25 per cent and, finally, Cape Verde's capacity to utilize effectively the funds being allocated. Among the unfavourable factors were the geographical distance separating the country's islands and the consequent high costs for communication and transportation between islands, the country's poverty, the high fertility rate that resulted in an annual population growth rate estimated at 2.8 per cent and the lack of human resources due to the high turnover of personnel and to emigration.

35. The representative of Cape Verde noted that his country had already started implementing an integrated reproductive health programme and that he was looking forward to even greater achievements during the period of the proposed country programme. Several delegations expressed their support for the proposed programme. One delegation felt that while the programme as a whole was good, there needed to be a more coordinated approach to the activities being proposed under the country programme. Another delegation stressed the need for programme strategies that emphasized capacity-building, especially in a country like Cape Verde, where national execution was already so prominent.

36. The Director of the Africa Division responded that the formulation of the country programme took into account the ICPD Programme of Action and the country's needs as they had been assessed through the PRSD exercise. Emphasis had been given to the programme approach as opposed to the project approach. Moreover, to develop a sense of ownership by the Government it had been closely involved in the process of the PRSD exercise and the formulation of the new country programme.

37. The Executive Board approved the proposed country programme for Cape Verde as presented in document DP/FPA/CP/153 in the amount of $6 million over the five-year period 1996-2000.

Assistance to the Government of Chad (DP/FPA/CP/150)

38. The Director of the Africa Division presented the proposed third country programme for Chad. She outlined the main sectoral objectives of the proposed

programme along with their respective strategies. Attention was paid to the role of UNFPA in advocacy activities that aimed at sensitizing leaders as well as the general public to population issues and to make the national population policy, which was adopted in 1995, more generally known. It was underlined that the challenge of the programme would be to implement the national population policy, the policy declaration on the integration of women into the development process and the population IEC strategy adopted in 1995. UNFPA would continue its close collaboration and coordination with other national and international development partners in the country.

39. One delegation asked for details on the sources of the multi-bilateral funding that was mentioned in the country programme. The delegation of Germany expressed the willingness of his Government to support this effort. Delegations also mentioned the important role that UNFPA had to play in the advocacy sector as a way of strengthening the national capacity to implement the population programme. One delegation that had visited Chad complimented the Fund on the dedication of its staff in that country and stated that the effects of population IEC efforts were apparent.

40. The Director of the Africa Division stated that once the programme had been approved, UNFPA would work through its office in Chad to contact potential bilateral and multilateral donors for help in financing the approved activities. She thanked the delegation of Germany for its support.

41. The Executive Board approved the country programme for Chad as presented in DP/FPA/CP/150 in the amount of $9 million for the five-year period 1996-2000.

Assistance to the Government of Ghana (DP/FPA/CP/151)

42. The Director of the Africa Division introduced the proposed country programme for Ghana, which would be the Fund's third cycle of assistance to that country. She stated that about 70 per cent of the proposed funds would be directed to upgrading and rehabilitating existing health service delivery points so that they could provide integrated reproductive health, including sexual health and family planning services. An adolescent reproductive health programme was to be developed to address the needs of both in-school and out-of-school youth. UNFPA would assist the Government in strengthening the National Population Council and the National Council on Women and Development. In the area of advocacy, the National Population Council would consolidate all existing IEC initiatives under its charge. The National Population Council would therefore be the lead agency in carrying out advocacy efforts to promote the goals of the ICPD, the Fourth World Conference on Women, especially those relating to the girl child, and the removal of obstacles that hindered the realization of women's rights.

43. One delegation mentioned that the quantifiable targets of the proposed programme were not very ambitious and asked the Director to comment. The same delegation also spoke in favour of greater coordination between UNFPA and bilateral programmes. Another delegation spoke in favour of the proposed country programme and observed that the proposed activities of UNFPA complemented those of his own country's bilateral programme quite well. He welcomed the proposed programme's focus on the reproductive health needs of

youth through the provision of family life education and reproductive health services. Another delegation, speaking on behalf of other African delegations, noted that the new country programme would be preceded by a workshop initiated by UNFPA and the National Population Council and that this would help to identify strategies needed to achieve the ICPD goals, to which the Government of Ghana was fully committed and which it expected to achieve. He congratulated UNFPA and the Government of Ghana on the progress that had already been made.

44. The representative of Ghana thanked the delegates for their comments and observed that the proposed country programme would be harmonized with the programming cycles of other United Nations agencies and organizations. He felt confident that the proposed programme would go a long ways towards further integration of population into Ghana's development process.

45. In her reply, the Director observed that the proposed country programme was based on the programme approach and that was why there were less apparent targets for specific sectors. She also added that Ghana had been one of the first to develop a population policy and that the Government had the political will and necessary human resources to implement the proposed programme. National capacity-building was very high on the proposed programme's agenda.

46. The Executive Board approved the proposed country programme for Ghana as presented in DP/FPA/CP/151 in the amount of $25 million over the five-year period 1996-2000.

Extension of, and additional resources for, the country programme for Congo (DP/FPA/1996/16)

47. In introducing the request for the extension of, and additional resources for, the country programme for Congo, the Director of the Africa Division noted that because of socio-political changes and disturbances in the country, only 49 per cent of available funds of the second country programme had been spent by the end of 1995. Therefore, the Fund was requesting an extension of the programme for a bridging period of two years, 1997-1998, as well as increased funding authority of $1.8 million to carry out further activities, mainly in the area of reproductive health and advocacy. Better implementation rates were expected for the remainder of the extended programme in view of increased political stability and programme management capacity.

48. One of the delegations questioned whether it was wise to put more money into the Congo country programme at this juncture, when so much remained to be spent from the ongoing programme. He also questioned the goals of the proposed extension. Other delegations spoke in favour of the proposal. The representative of Congo said that UNFPA and his country had long cooperated in the field of population and that the request for additional resources was justified in that it would help Congo build up its own capacity to carry out population programmes. He reported that his country had undergone some difficult times in recent years and that this was partially responsible for the low level of implementation of the UNFPA programme. However, the situation had now improved greatly and he was confident that the programme could be successfully implemented.

49. The Director of the Africa Division told the Board that the proposed extension was truly a bridging proposal designed to incorporate a broader reproductive health approach into programme activities in Congo. The increase in the number of NGOs and the emergence of private sector initiatives also offered new possibilities to widen the scope of programme implementation and the provision of services that would lead to the development of the next country programme.

50. The Executive Board approved the extension of the Congo country programme for the two-year period 1997-1998 and additional resources in the amount of $1.8 million as presented in document DP/FPA/1996/16.

B. Division for Arab States and Europe

Assistance to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic (DP/FPA/CP/152)

51. The Director of the Division for the Arab States and Europe presented the proposed country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic. She introduced the UNFPA Representative for the Syrian Arab Republic, who would also be available to answer any questions about the proposed programme. In her introduction, the Director stated that this would be the fifth UNFPA country programme in the Syrian Arab Republic and that remarkable progress had been made in the country in the area of population since the Fund had first started working there. The commitment of the Government was shown by the fact that it was making a large financial contribution to the proposed programme. The programme would focus on reproductive health, with 75 per cent of the proposed allocations going to that sector. However, there would also be a focus on the empowerment of women. The laws on gender equality in the Syrian Arab Republic were exemplary but there was still work to be done in putting such equality into practice. In particular, there was a great need to narrow the gap in the illiteracy rates and educational attainment of men and women. There was also a need to reduce the disparity in the reproductive health services available in rural and urban areas. The proposed programme would also have an important segment concerning the reproductive health needs of men and youth, about which she was very optimistic. The Syrian Arab Republic was unique in the Arab world in that it provided both reproductive health education and services for its young people.

52. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic thanked the Director for her presentation and informed the Board that his Government was firmly committed to the goals of the ICPD. The Government had approved a cash contribution of 35 million Syrian pounds as cost-sharing to the proposed fifth country programme, and some of these funds had already been forwarded to UNFPA. In addition, the Government has earmarked 891 million Syrian pounds in kind to the proposed fifth country programme that would be used for national staff, transportation and overhead expenses of the UNFPA office in the Syrian Arab Republic. He expressed his appreciation for the valuable work the Fund was doing in his country and in the world.

53. The Board approved the proposed country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic as presented in document DP/FPA/CP/152 in the amount of $18 million for the five-year period 1996-2000.

C. Division for Latin America and the Caribbean

Request for extension of, and additional resources for, Bolivia (DP/FPA/1996/2)

54. The Director of the Latin America and the Caribbean Division presented the request for the extension of the Bolivia programme of assistance by one year, until the end of 1996, and the increase in the funding authority by $2 million. She reiterated some of the highlights of the proposed extension as contained in DP/FPA/1996/12, noting that by far the largest share of the proposed additional resources would go to improving reproductive health services in Bolivia and extending the current coverage of those services.

55. The representative of Bolivia expressed the appreciation of his Government for the assistance being provided by UNFPA to his country. The representative highlighted the importance of that assistance in the context of the present social sector reforms, the decentralization process and the implementation of the Popular Participation Law, all of which were currently taking place in Bolivia.

56. The efforts being made by UNFPA to harmonize its programming cycle with that of other JCGP organizations was commended by one delegation, which also requested information regarding the support being provided by UNFPA against the backdrop of the present reforms in the area of decentralization and in implementing the Popular Participation Law.

57. The Director of the Latin America and the Caribbean Division stated that the core of the proposed UNFPA assistance would be provided in the context and support of the ongoing social sector reform. UNFPA was supporting the National Health Secretariat's efforts to decentralize the operation and administration of health services with the aim of providing quality reproductive health services at the municipal level. UNFPA was also supporting the National Education Secretariat in implementing education reform, which included the incorporation of sex education into the curricula and teaching materials of primary schools, as well as by providing training for the pedagogic advisers who implemented the reform at the local level.

58. The Executive Board approved the request for the extension of the country programme for Bolivia through the end of 1996 and for additional resources of $2 million as presented in document DP/FPA/1996/12.

IV. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNFPA PUBLICATIONS PROGRAMME

59. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) introduced the report on the effectiveness of UNFPA publications (DP/FPA/1996/14). He noted that public information activities were central to the Fund's mandate as expressed in Economic and Social Council resolution 1763 (LIV) of May 1973 and endorsed by subsequent instruments, including the Programme of Action of the ICPD. He listed the main publications produced, and the languages in which they were produced, to carry out this awareness-raising mandate under both the administrative and programme support services (APSS) budget and the programme budgets, in keeping with Governing Council decision 91/36. He emphasized that

the Fund had been conscious of issues of cost-effectiveness and noted the use of competitive bidding processes and the exploration of new technologies, such as the Fund's World Wide Web site, which was an inexpensive medium for dissemination, as means of achieving economies. He further pointed out that UNFPA publications, which were largely intended for a general readership, did not duplicate, but rather complemented, the publications of other population organizations, such as the United Nations Population Division and The Population Council. He expressed pleasure at readership surveys that indicated that the Fund's publications were read, well received and widely shared, and that they succeeded in reaching specialized and general audiences.

60. Most delegations welcomed the report, although a number of them expressed the desire for more analysis, particularly on the issues of timely distribution of publications and their cost-effectiveness. Several delegations suggested that the Fund submit a forward-looking advocacy and public-information strategy at a future session of the Board. Such a presentation would be more systematic, analytical and strategic than the present report and would also provide more information on the intended audiences, costs and comparative advantages of the various publications, with a view to elaborating clear goals and avoiding duplication. To that end, some delegations suggested that the Fund consider holding informal consultations with Board members and observers and selected non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the coming months.

61. Concerns regarding the report notwithstanding, numerous delegations commended the Fund for the high quality and usefulness of its publications. A number of delegations said they found the Fund's publications to be effective and unique, and some commended the Fund on the progress it had made in increasing and improving the international community's awareness of the role of population in development. Other delegations noted that the methodology of the recently completed reader survey was designed to elicit responses from those who read the publications regularly and had positive responses.

62. Noting that only the State of World Population Report and the Annual Report were published in all six official languages of the United Nations, a number of delegations expressed the desire to see UNFPA publications produced in all the official languages and, in some cases, a greater number of local languages, perhaps through country-based production. Some delegations favoured the increased production and local distribution of publications as well as other information aids that did not rely on the printed word. They stressed that reaching people in developing countries, including in their remotest areas where there was the most need, was not simply a matter of addressing them in an accessible language but through a medium and a message that they could understand and relate to. Addressing the possible increased costs involved, some delegations suggested resources could be freed for those purposes by rationalizing the list of the Fund's technical and research-oriented publications as well as by ensuring that there was no duplication between publications aimed at the same readership. Some delegations raised the question of whether certain publications had become obsolete following the ICPD.

63. While appreciating their usefulness, a number of delegations expressed concern at the time-lag involved in publishing the Inventory of Population Projects in Developing Countries Around the World, the Guide to Sources of

International Population Assistance, and the Global Population Assistance Report. A number wished to see them published in more languages. Some delegations suggested means be found to streamline the data collection process, which was felt to be unwieldy and time-consuming.

64. Many delegations welcomed the Fund's use of the Internet. A number of delegations wanted to see more material in languages other than English. While some suggested that, in some instances, the Internet might prove a less costly alternative to publication, others cautioned against over-reliance on electronic dissemination since vast populations in developing countries lacked access to computers. Questions were raised as to the cost-effectiveness of using sound and graphics on the Web site. Some delegations also raised questions regarding the Fund's envisioned future use of the Internet and suggested that the Fund consult delegations on an informal basis.

65. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) thanked delegations for their comments. He was joined in his response by the Director, Information and External Relations Division, and the Chief, Editorial, Publications and Media Services Branch. They welcomed delegations' suggestions for more critical analysis, a forward-looking strategy and the use of cost-benefit analysis of the Fund's publications programme. They agreed on the need to reach populations that were physically, socially or culturally isolated, not only with publications but with non-print media, such as radio and television, as well. To an overwhelming extent, communication was seen as taking place at the local level, and the Fund tried to stimulate production and dissemination, at the country and local levels, of print, visual and audio-visual information materials. In addition, programme-specific information, education and communication (IEC) received some 19-20 per cent of country programme funds, and the Fund is looking at ways to optimize use of these resources in support of advocacy objectives.

66. The administration noted that the potential to increase distribution was limited only by the financial and personnel resources at the Fund's disposal. Nevertheless, the stock of information material distributed had increased from around one quarter of a million items in 1991 to half a million in 1995, without any increase in staff. Cost-effectiveness per se can be difficult to determine, but costs could be controlled. The administration explained that the role of the Information and External Relations Division was to manage, not to produce, information materials, hence costs were controlled through, for example, the competitive-bidding process. Such design and production work as was done in-house using modern, less costly technology than previously available was performed by re-trained, not new, staff members.

67. UNFPA was looking into the possibility of developing a common database to streamline the process and reduce the costs of data collection for the Inventory, Guide, and Global Population Assistance Report and was exploring the options for posting their contents on the Internet.

68. The administration explained that the UNFPA World Wide Web site was still at an early stage. It assured delegations that languages other than English would be used in its Internet postings as the technology permitted; that it would exploit the Internet's potential for synergies based on a realistic

assessment of the outreach of the medium, which was still quite limited; that, so far, it had used the Internet mainly to make available already published materials at low cost; and that it would balance the costs and benefits of using graphics and sound. By increasing collaboration with other organizations using the Internet in similar ways, it hoped to achieve economies in enhancing its own capabilities and to be able to monitor actual use of the Web site.

69. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/18. Publications programme of the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on the effectiveness of the publications programme of the United Nations Population Fund (DP/FPA/1996/14) and reaffirms the importance of information and advocacy activities that should enable the promotion of increased awareness and better understanding of Fund activities;

2. Also takes note of the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Population Fund to make most of its publications available in different languages and requests the Executive Director also to take into consideration the linguistic balances in developing the electronic dissemination of information;

3. Encourages the Executive Director to give special attention to the needs of the Information and External Relations Division publications programme to support information, education and communication efforts at the national and local levels with appropriate means;

4. Requests the Executive Director, in order to strengthen the publications of the United Nations Population Fund, to further develop policy and strategy in the area of communication and information, in the context of the role of the United Nations Population Fund in advocacy and in consultation with the members of the Board as well as with observers and non-governmental organizations, which takes account of the need to prioritize its publications with special attention to the content of other publications of the United Nations and the financial and human constraints of the Fund;

5. Also requests the Executive Director to submit to the Executive Board the strategy referred to in paragraph 4 above prior to the session that will examine the biennial budget estimates for 1998-1999 for administrative and programme support services;

6. Further requests the Executive Director to present in the document concerning the presentation of the biennial budget estimates for 1998-1999 detailed costs of publications, including information on the distribution of publications;

7. Requests the Executive Director to examine and to propose to the Executive Board recommendations to facilitate the timely collection and dissemination of current data contained in the Inventory of Population Projects in Developing Countries Around the World and of the Guide to Sources of International Population Assistance.

28 March 1996

V. ROLE OF UNFPA IN ASSESSING AND MEETING CONTRACEPTIVE REQUIREMENTS AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT NEEDS

70. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) introduced the report on "the future role of UNFPA in assessing and meeting the unmet needs for contraceptives and the requirements for logistics management" (DP/FPA/1996/2). He noted that the report outlined both the past achievements for the years 1990-1995 of the Global Initiative on Contraceptive Requirements and Logistics Management Needs in Developing Countries and its plan of action for the years 1996-1999. The Global Initiative had completed 11 out of 12 in-depth country studies that it had undertaken: the final study could not be completed because of a national strike in the country involved.

71. Other accomplishments of the Global Initiative included: (a) in-depth studies in three additional countries, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Morocco, and a follow-up study in India; (b) publication of a number of technical reports, including those of the in-depth studies; and (c) a database on donor-supported contraceptive commodities. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) further noted that the plan of action of the Global Initiative for the years 1996-1999 was in continuity with its past activities and in line with the recently approved Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme in assisting countries with known logistics problems and in the need for strengthening national capacity-building in developing countries. These planned activities included: (a) training in the forecasting techniques of contraceptive requirements and logistics management; (b) conducting mid-term follow-up studies to the case-studies already completed; (c) developing and refining the contraceptive commodity database in order to include more prospective data; and (d) organizing more in-depth studies, giving priority to sub-Saharan African countries and least developed countries.

72. Numerous delegations welcomed and supported the activities of the Global Initiative. Some delegations emphasized the need to establish close links with the recently approved Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme (decision 96/03) and stated that the proposal for training in contraceptive forecasting techniques should be more needs-based. Some delegations stressed that the work of the Global Initiative should be undertaken within the broader context of reproductive health, and its technical services should be made available to all countries. It was also suggested by some delegations that in carrying out 12 in-depth country studies, the Global Initiative must have established a model that could be used in conducting future in-depth studies at lower cost and with fewer personnel.

73. In response to the suggestions made by the Executive Board, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) re-emphasized that the Global Initiative operated within the broader framework of reproductive health by: (a) enabling men and women, particularly women, to make informed choices and (b) helping to find the right mix of contraceptive methods to achieve desired results. He further noted that estimating contraceptive requirements not only to serve family planning needs but for HIV/AIDS prevention programmes as well had broadened the scope of the Global Initiative. Future coordination with the Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme would aim primarily at building national capacity to assess the needs of couples and individuals and to improve and strengthen contraceptive logistics management. He also noted that such assessments would become an integral part of PRSD exercises.

74. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/14. Role of the United Nations Population Fund in assessing and meeting contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on the future role of the United Nations Population Fund in assessing and meeting the unmet needs for contraceptives and the requirements for logistics management (DP/FPA/1996/2);

2. Endorses the proposed future activities of the Global Initiative on Contraceptive Requirements and Logistics Management Needs in the Developing Countries in the 1990s;

3. Requests the Executive Director to submit a progress report on the activities of the Global Initiative as part of her annual report.

26 March 1996

VI. MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNICEF/WHO JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY

75. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) introduced the background note on possible membership of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board in the Joint Committee on Health Policy (JCHP) of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) (DP/FPA/1996/5), which had been prepared in response to the request of the Executive Board at its annual session 1995. He provided an overview of the composition, history and activities of the Joint Committee as an advisory body that helped to enhance coordination in the health policies of WHO and UNICEF. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) emphasized that participation of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board in the Joint Committee would provide the only intergovernmental mechanism for the discussion of health policy concerns common to WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA and

would be especially helpful in achieving the health and related social goals put forward by recent international conferences and summits.

76. Several delegations noted their appreciation that UNFPA was working to increase coordination with UNICEF and WHO and acknowledged the importance of extending such collaboration to the intergovernmental level. One delegation noted the usefulness of the Board's membership in the JCHP but emphasized the need for a revitalization of the JCHP in which UNFPA could play an important role. Another delegation supported the proposal in order to ensure that JCHP would undertake appropriate actions in the area of reproductive health.

77. However, some delegations expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the JCHP and the usefulness of the Board's participation. One delegation suggested that the agenda of the Joint Committee should be reduced, rather than expanded. A number of delegations requested more information on the experiences of current JCHP members and the advantages of the Board's membership in the Committee. One delegation suggested that in order to facilitate the decision of the Board UNFPA could provide specific examples of areas where joint recommendations from JCHP would be helpful.

78. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) thanked the members of the Executive Board for their comments and suggestions. He noted the overall agreement of all delegations with the need for improved collaboration at the intergovernmental level. In view of the reservations expressed by several delegations, he invited further review by the Board of experiences with the Joint Committee in order to assess the benefits of its membership.

79. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/17. Inter-agency coordination in health policy and programming

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the background note on possible membership of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund in the Joint Committee on Health Policy of the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization (DP/FPA/1996/5);

2. Reaffirms the need for close collaboration at all levels among the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund on matters of mutual interest and related activities, including, inter alia, issues relating to follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development;

3. Encourages the Executive Director to explore ways to further strengthen inter-agency coordination in the area of health policy and programming, in particular with the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization, in order to develop coordinated health policies and programmes, including reproductive health, in the context of the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development;

4. Invites the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to present an oral report to the Executive Board at its third regular session in 1996 on steps undertaken to implement the present decision.

28 March 1996

UNDP/UNFPA JOINT SEGMENT

VII. UNDP/UNFPA: HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

80. The UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Finance and Administration, on behalf of UNDP and UNFPA, addressed the Executive Board in an oral report on budget harmonization. He noted that UNICEF would present a similar oral report at its Executive Board session in April 1996.

81. He outlined the context of UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board decision 95/30 and UNICEF Executive Board decision 1995/37 on budget harmonization, which had led to the oral report at the present session.

82. Internal working documents on the comparison of budget presentations were available to the Executive Board.

83. In summarizing the actions taken to date, the Assistant Administrator noted that in 1995, a detailed comparison of budget presentations, based on the 1994-1995 initial budget estimates of UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF, had been completed. The study had revealed that the budget presentations of UNDP and UNFPA were harmonized to a large extent and were in line with the budget presentation of the United Nations. While UNDP had initially based its budget presentation on that of the United Nations, and UNFPA had subsequently revised its budget presentation to harmonize it with that of UNDP and the United Nations, UNICEF had developed its budget presentation independently. The study showed material differences in content, definition of concepts and presentation between the budgets of UNDP and UNFPA, and those of UNICEF.

84. However, during 1994, UNICEF had undertaken a major management review, which among other things, recommended that UNICEF adopt what was called an integrated budget approach, entailing fundamental changes in the scope and content of its budget presentation. The UNICEF Executive Board had endorsed those recommendations in September 1995 and agreed that UNICEF would initially present a 1996-1997 budget covering its headquarters and regional offices only, in the new format, to be considered by its Board in April 1996. Thus, the earlier comparison based on the 1994-1995 budget estimates was rendered obsolete.

85. A new comparison based on 1996-1997 budget estimates for the three organizations could be undertaken only when UNICEF had prepared its 1996-1997 budget for headquarters and regional offices, a document that had been finalized in mid-February 1996. Since that time, a preliminary comparison of the budgets of the three organizations had been completed. The comparison covered headquarters activities only. A comparison of field activities would be

undertaken in 1997, when UNICEF had prepared its field budget for the first time in the new format. He noted that the comparison was based on the proposed budget of UNICEF, which had not yet been approved by its Executive Board.

86. The preliminary comparison indicated that the differences between UNICEF on the one hand, and UNDP and UNFPA on the other, might not have narrowed. The differences concerned not only the presentation but also the scope and content of the budget. Moreover, the inherent differences in the nature of the organizations needed to be taken into consideration. More work was thus needed in order to present to the respective Executive Boards a comprehensive picture of the substantive issues involved.

87. With regard to the timing and nature of future reports to the Executive Boards, UNDP and UNFPA would present another oral progress report at the annual session 1996 together with working papers as needed. An account of the debate on the issue was also to be reported to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in June/July 1996. The Assistant Administrator noted that the annual session of UNICEF would not have taken place in time for reporting to the Economic and Social Council session nor would it have proposals for the budgets of its field offices. It thus seemed impractical to have proposals reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in time for the third regular session 1996, to be held in September, as requested by the Executive Board, since the documentation would have to be ready by May 1996 at the same time or prior to the annual Executive Board session. He suggested that the presentation of the initial proposals to the Executive Board be made in January 1997 at the first regular session 1997 rather than at the third regular session 1996. However, if the Board wished, another oral progress report could be presented at the third regular session 1996.

88. One delegation thanked the Assistant Administrator for an excellent statement, the work done so far and expressed appreciation for the working papers made available. It was a good starting point to see where harmonization was possible. The delegation, supported by others, underlined the goal of harmonization of budgets to make them more similar so as to promote understanding and support good decision-making. The similarities must go beyond content and presentation styles to encompass the underlying principles of the preparation of accounts and estimates. All budget documents must be upgraded while recognizing that more similarity would not mean sameness but that variances from the harmonization norm should be clearly indicated in the budget documents. The efforts to harmonize budgets must include: a common definition and usage of budget terms (i.e., the same words must mean the same thing from one budget to the next); commonly accepted accounting approaches and policies; disclosure of basic key information (e.g., on the use of funds, a breakdown of overhead costs, programme delivery costs and programme costs and, within those, a breakdown of salaries versus operating costs, and again, within those, a breakdown of Professional and non-Professional staff); minimum requirements for content, such as the same types of tables with similar kinds of breakdowns and roll-ups; and a common presentation style, ideally one budget document that consolidated the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources and, as a minimum, a summary table that consolidated the global financial plan of the organization. The harmonization of budgets must lead to simplification, visibility, completeness and comparability.

89. Other delegations asked for adherence to the reporting schedule determined by the Executive Board, even if progress could not go as far as envisaged, in order to comply with national auditing requirements. The Economic and Social Council session would also provide an opportunity for discussion among the members of the different Executive Boards.

90. The Executive Board took note of the oral progress report on harmonization of budgets and accounts.

VIII. UNDP/UNFPA: THE JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

91. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) introduced the report of the Administrator on UNDP support for and collaboration with the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (DP/1996/10).

92. He noted the progress by UNAIDS and its co-sponsors in setting up a framework to support programme countries to address the challenges posed by the epidemic. UNDP resident representatives, in their role as resident coordinators, were facilitating the work of UNAIDS at the country level, in particular through the creation of United Nations theme groups on HIV/AIDS, of which 65 were now in existence.

93. The Assistant Administrator highlighted the decisions taken at the last meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) of UNAIDS, held in Geneva from 13-15 November 1995. The PCB had: endorsed the UNAIDS Strategic Plan for 1996-2000 and a prospective mode of operations at the country level; approved the budget for UNAIDS for the biennium 1996-1997 at $120 million; established two working groups, one on performance monitoring and evaluation, chaired by the United States and the other on resource mobilization, chaired by Sweden; and taken note of the "Global Appeal", which would raise funds for UNAIDS activities included in the biennial programme budget and a plan for co-sponsors' activities to be agreed jointly with UNAIDS, for up to $20 million for 1996-1997. Members of the PCB who also served on governing bodies of the co-sponsoring organizations were invited to pay special attention to financing HIV/AIDS-related activities of the co-sponsors from core and extrabudgetary funds.

94. In that regard, UNDP planned to devote a substantial amount of attention to the development of methodology in innovative programming and backstopping of country offices. The Assistant Administrator stated that in the 1996-1997 biennium budget only one core post had been allocated to the headquarters programme. He stated that he was committed to finding further core resources through a possible reallocation of current budgetary resources. However, he emphasized the need for extrabudgetary resources in order to continue support to the country offices. He noted that more than 90 per cent of the resources spent at headquarters in HIV and development came from extrabudgetary funding.

95. Country-level activities were focused primarily on capacity-building, tailored to each country's needs. UNDP and UNAIDS were finalizing their working

arrangements at the country level, in particular with reference to the logistical and administrative support and financial services to be provided by UNDP. Some of those services would form part of an in-kind contribution to UNAIDS and others would be administered by UNDP at the request of UNAIDS. It would also be determined how UNDP programme staff in country offices, in particular those working on HIV and development, would assist UNAIDS.

96. At the regional level, the first study of HIV/AIDS and development implications in the Pacific had been published in Fiji, entitled "Time to Act: the Pacific Response to HIV/AIDS".

97. The Chief, Technical and Evaluation Division, introduced the report on "UNFPA support for and collaboration in the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)" (DP/FPA/1996/4). He noted that the document had been prepared for the first regular session of the Executive Board and did not include the latest information from the recently published AIDS Update 1995, copies of which were available at the current session of the Board. He added that the French and Spanish versions of the AIDS Update 1995 would be available shortly. He explained that as one of the six co-sponsors of UNAIDS, UNFPA had been fully involved in the process of its development over the past two years. At the same time, UNFPA had taken care to ensure that support for HIV/AIDS prevention was not diminished at the country level. He explained that in 1995 UNFPA had supported HIV/AIDS prevention activities (including supply and distribution of condoms, HIV/AIDS IEC activities, and HIV/AIDS training) in 114 countries as compared to 103 in 1994. The financial support of UNFPA for HIV/AIDS prevention activities was provisionally estimated at $20 million in 1995, compared to an estimated $15.5 million in 1994.

98. The Chief, Technical and Evaluation Division, said that UNFPA would continue to provide support in line with national AIDS prevention and control programmes and within the context of the theme group mechanism being set up at the country level by UNAIDS. At the global level, UNFPA would not propose additional activities but rather looked to UNAIDS, in collaboration with the Reproductive Health Programme of WHO, to address the key policy, strategy, technical, research and development and training issues in regard to HIV/AIDS in the broader framework of reproductive health. He stressed that UNFPA support to UNAIDS went beyond advocacy and included the following actions: since the end of 1994 UNFPA had seconded a staff member to UNAIDS; UNFPA had provided a grant to the HIV/AIDS task force for the production of the biennial report on global activities; and the Executive Board at its third regular session 1995 had approved, as part of the Fund's intercountry programme for 1996-1999, an expansion of UNFPA support to UNAIDS over the next four years.

99. The Director of External Relations for UNAIDS underlined the need for the governing bodies of co-sponsoring organizations to give their firm commitment to UNAIDS. She welcomed the opportunity to exchange information on joint activities. Calling UNAIDS a pioneer for United Nations reform, she noted that the tripartite PCB was unique in that it included five non-governmental organizations as members. She emphasized the priorities of coordination, harmonization of policies, mutual administrative support, and information-sharing among the co-sponsors and UNAIDS. The aim of UNAIDS was to mobilize

resources for a synergistic effect, not to take over the individual roles of the co-sponsors.

100. UNAIDS would be staffed by 53 Professional posts and 38 General Service posts at its headquarters in Geneva. Thirty-four Professional and 32 General Service posts had already been filled. UNAIDS planned to assign country programme advisers (CPAs) to work under the supervision of the chairs of the country-level theme groups. Of the 45 planned as the initial number of CPAs, 11 had already been assigned. Of a planned 29 intercountry technical advisers, one had been assigned. UNAIDS was considering the possibility of using staff involved in HIV/AIDS activities from co-sponsoring organizations to fulfil CPA duties in those countries in which CPAs were not posted.

101. UNAIDS looked to UNDP for leadership at the country level through the resident coordinator system. In addition to the negotiation of the agreement on the provision of administrative and logistical support referred to by the Assistant Administrator, UNAIDS was considering outposting a representative to the Office for United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS) in New York.

102. A memorandum of understanding had been signed by the six executive heads of co-sponsoring organizations on cooperation between the organizations and UNAIDS. Copies were made available to the Executive Board.

103. The committee of co-sponsoring organizations (CCO) would meet on 24 April 1996 in New York under the chairmanship of the UNICEF Executive Director. A resumed meeting of the CCO was planned during the first regular session of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), to be held in Nairobi on 28 and 29 April 1996. The programme coordinating board would meet in Geneva on 10 and 11 June 1996.

104. One delegation, on behalf of 11 others, reiterating the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, thanked the organizations for their presentations and welcomed UNAIDS as an innovative United Nations response that should make an effective contribution to programme countries. Coordination among the co-sponsors and UNAIDS must be ensured. However, the item, postponed twice, should have been considered earlier by the Executive Board. He noted that document DP/1996/10 lacked information on the specific commitment of UNDP to UNAIDS, particularly the amount of financing for AIDS activities in 1996-1997 and the modus operandi for work in country offices. Moreover, the question was raised about the signing of a UNDP/UNAIDS joint arrangement.

105. Several delegations, including the first speaker, asked for clarification of the role of the 22 UNDP national professional officers (NPOs) for HIV and development, whose posts had been approved by the Executive Board in its decision 94/6. One representative questioned the slow recruitment of an NPO in his country.

106. One delegation emphasized that the work of UNDP and UNFPA highlighted the developmental aspect of the United Nations work to combat HIV/AIDS. The speaker also questioned how coordination by the resident coordinator could be strengthened in that area. A common responsibility of the co-sponsors for financing UNAIDS was also underlined.

107. One delegation, speaking on behalf of numerous delegations, commended UNFPA efforts in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention, and expressed satisfaction with UNFPA working relationship with UNAIDS. Several other delegations commended UNFPA support for HIV/AIDS prevention activities at the country level as outlined in the AIDS Update 1995.

108. One speaker, also on behalf of another, said that the documents were lacking information but that the oral reports had supplemented them satisfactorily. UNAIDS must have a real impact in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The speaker asked if part of the country allocation could be used for programme work in HIV/AIDS.

109. Support was expressed for the memorandum of understanding between UNAIDS and its co-sponsors as a basis for future work, as well as for the participation of UNAIDS representatives in future Executive Board sessions.

110. In response, the Assistant Administrator thanked the speakers for their comments. He regretted the postponement by the Executive Board of consideration of the item and noted that information had nevertheless been distributed at the previous sessions. He stated that the UNDP commitment to UNAIDS would be drawn from different sources. The core budget of UNDP for programme activities managed at the global level would amount to over $500,000 during 1996-1997. However, an additional $3.5 million in extrabudgetary funds would be required.

111. In addition, one staff member financed from the UNDP core budget had been seconded to UNAIDS. Through individual country indicative planning figures and regional allocations, some $125 million was being allocated for fifth programming cycle programmes. However, a figure for the future allocation at the country level was difficult to ascertain although it had been indicated that many country offices would have HIV/AIDS components. Special regional programmes could also be formulated. As the national professional officers were core staff they could not be assigned as UNAIDS staff, but could and would support its work. Specific forms of that support would be discussed on a case-by-case basis with UNAIDS. The Executive Board had approved the NPOs with the intention of using national expertise more fully and because of their cost-effectiveness. The Board had also directed UNDP to ensure that their terms of reference be reviewed to make their role compatible with the work of UNAIDS. He expected that the situation in the one country to which an NPO had been allocated but not yet assigned would soon be resolved.

112. The Director of External Relations of UNAIDS referred to the 11 March 1996 letter from the UNAIDS Director addressed to the Administrator regarding negotiations on the role of NPOs vis-à-vis UNAIDS. The intention was that NPOs in countries without CPAs would function as UNAIDS CPAs part of the time. UNAIDS would in turn provide training, support, and equipment as needed. The role of NPOs would be identified in the broader framework to be elaborated.

113. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/16. Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

The Executive Board

1. Welcomes the reports prepared and the oral presentations made by the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Development Programme covering their support to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in particular at the country level, and reaffirms the importance of collective and concerted action on HIV/AIDS by all the co-sponsoring agencies and coordinated through the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS;

2. Requests the United Nations Development Programme to conclude without delay arrangements with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS relating to the financial, administrative and logistical support to work in the area of HIV/AIDS as well as to clarify the role and function of the national programme officers appointed to provide support to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS in accordance with Executive Board decision 94/6;

3. Recommends that the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS be given the opportunity to brief the Executive Board on its activities during the joint UNDP/UNFPA segment at the annual session 1996.

28 March 1996

UNDP SEGMENT

IX. AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS

114. The Associate Administrator introduced the two reports prepared for the item: the report on the financial status of agency support costs (DP/1995/49), originally prepared for the third regular session 1995 and that on the implementation of the support cost components of the successor programming arrangements approved under Executive Board decision 95/23 (DP/1996/13). An informal paper that helped to clarify some of the more technical aspects of the subject was also distributed during the session.

115. The Associate Administrator summarized the objectives and the facilities of the support cost arrangements that had been introduced during the fifth programming cycle. He clarified that those facilities would continue to operate in the next programming period and would be modified only to the extent necessary to reflect experience during the fifth cycle and to conform with the support cost provisions of the successor programming arrangements. That included the consolidation of financial earmarkings into three major lines, replacing the nine separate lines used in the fifth cycle.

116. He highlighted the major changes for the next programming period. First, United Nations system support for policy and programme development (SPPD) (a similar facility to technical support services at the programme level (TSS-1), used for upstream technical support) had now been extended to regional commissions. Secondly, in light of fifth cycle experience, SPPD management was being decentralized to country offices, with allocations to be made under the

resource assignment procedures for the successor programming arrangements. Finally, because the cluster rates of administrative and operational services (AOS) reimbursement for large agencies had proven cumbersome during the fifth cycle, especially at the country level, simplification was recommended. That would involve a uniform 10 per cent AOS reimbursement rate for the larger agencies.

117. Many speakers were pleased to note that the support cost system introduced in the fifth cycle had contributed to the significant increase in national execution during the period as well as to a more focused application of agency technical support. One representative suggested that with the reduced role of UNDP as a central funding agency, and the shifting nature of agency support under national execution, it might be necessary for UNDP to review existing overall support cost arrangements. The basic question remained how to reinforce the agencies as centres of excellence and a valuable source of expertise for programme countries while at the same time ensuring the best quality and price of such services, on a more competitive basis.

118. Several delegations pointed out that some of the mid-term review reports had recommended the expansion of the technical support facilities to a wider range of agents. That would permit national institutions, non-governmental organizations, private sector and development banks, among others, to be directly reimbursed, without necessarily going through a specialized agency. Launching the successor programming arrangements might offer an ideal opportunity to introduce such an expansion.

119. Speakers appreciated that the proposals contained in document DP/1996/13 represented an adaptation of the current support cost system, based on actual experience during the fifth cycle. For instance, one delegation commented that the positioning of upstream technical support was now much clearer, but it was necessary to increase consultations with Governments to focus that support more directly on country programming priorities. Similarly, technical support at the project level remained critical to ensure that sound technical backstopping from agencies was available for national execution.

120. Clarification was sought on what action was required of the Executive Board at the current session. Many delegations felt that the proposals were acceptable and feasible but also wanted to hear the views of specialized agencies. One representative requested information on how the agencies allocated funds for their participation in UNDP activities.

121. While delegations were grateful for the explanations provided in the introduction and the informal paper, many requested additional information on a number of technical aspects. Several speakers queried the basis for the proposed earmarkings for both the large and small agencies and for the regional commissions and how those amounts related to actual country needs that would emerge during the programming process. One delegation asked whether upstream technical support needed to be limited to sustainable human development activities.

122. Many speakers supported the proposal to simplify AOS for large agencies by replacing the cluster rates for different project components (which currently

averaged 10 per cent) with a uniform 10 per cent reimbursement rate. However, one speaker queried the basis for establishing AOS reimbursement rates, in comparison to the rates used by other entities, for instance: the 13 per cent paid to smaller agencies (which could rise to 22 per cent with flexibility provisions) and the 10 per cent average rate paid to large agencies, as compared to the rates charged by the Office for Project Services and the trust funds, and on cost-shared activities. One speaker requested a fuller explanation of the existing flexibility provisions and another asked whether diseconomies of scale were measured on project size or volume. One representative wondered whether a uniform rate of reimbursement might inadvertently serve as an incentive to inflate the size of projects. Another speaker asked whether AOS applied to the cost-sharing components of UNDP projects.

123. One delegation wanted to know how the allocation of SPPD resources would affect the distribution of country resources to regions and to low-income and least developed countries. He also sought clarification on how the regional commissions were included in the support cost system.

124. In response to the issues raised, the Associate Administrator clarified that the Executive Board could take note of the financial status of support costs as contained in document DP/1995/49. As regarded document DP/1996/13, the Executive Board might wish to note how the support cost system was being streamlined in line with its decision 95/23 on the successor programming arrangements, and the fifth cycle experience. The proposal for a 10 per cent uniform reimbursement rate for large agencies would be subject to Executive Board approval.

125. The Associate Administrator emphasized that the earmarkings presented in document DP/1996/13 were notional, and would be adjusted in response to actual demand for the different windows of services. He confirmed that SPPD had been expanded to include regional commissions under decision 95/23 and related document DP/1995/32. Their earmarking represented a notional estimate of demand in the first round. As for the involvement of non-governmental organizations and other potential implementation agents, there remained a number of ways in which they could, and did, become involved in UNDP-funded activities. He also confirmed that support cost resources would be allocated by regional bureaux for distribution in conformity with decision 95/23.

126. Continuing, he recalled that the recent evaluation of national execution called for an enhancement of the participation of United Nations agencies. He emphasized that while the support cost system was intended to help programme countries to access the knowledge of specialized agencies and regional commissions, it also permitted those entities to amplify their expertise through participation in operational activities in their areas of competence. In recognition of that dual benefit, the support cost system had always involved a sharing of costs between the agencies and UNDP. For instance, under TSS-1, UNDP covered about two thirds of the associated costs, and in AOS, UNDP covered an average of 10 per cent as against total costs, which varied between 21 and 22 per cent. For the smaller agencies, the flexibility provisions compensated for the diseconomies of scale associated with involvement in a limited number of projects.

127. In moving to a uniform rate of reimbursement (in lieu of cluster rates) for the large agencies, the cost measurement systems would still be maintained, as they provided valuable monitoring information for possible future adjustments of rates. He clarified that UNDP consulted regularly with the agencies on those matters, noting that representatives of agencies present might wish to comment further.

128. The Director of the Division for Resources Planning and Coordination of the Bureau for Resources and External Affairs recalled that under the former support cost system, agencies could be involved at all stages of projects, but would be reimbursed support costs based only on their involvement at the implementation stage, calculated at 13 per cent of project expenditures. The former system was obviously unsuited to national execution, where it was desirable to distinguish technical support for formulation and backstopping from administrative and operational services. With the introduction of the new support cost regime in the fifth cycle, those objectives had been largely achieved through increasing use of national execution and implementation, and more focused technical service contributions from the agencies.

129. When the new regime was developed for AOS in the fifth cycle, it was considered advisable to establish a cluster of reimbursement rates to reflect the varying labour intensiveness of different project components. The mix of project inputs had been changing over time, and UNDP now operated a weighted system that covered a maximum of 10 per cent of the 21-22 per cent total costs. The cluster system, however, had proven cumbersome, particularly for country offices. Given that UNDP reimbursed less than half of the total costs and that the overall volume of AOS was much less than originally expected, the usefulness of fine tuning had become questionable. By reverting to a uniform rate, the advantages of separating technical and administrative services were still maintained, and an aspect that added little value could be eliminated. The Director added that ex post facto costing reports could be made available to interested delegations.

130. He confirmed that under national execution, any amount set aside for AOS that was not paid to agencies continued to revert to Governments for programming. The difference under the successor programming arrangements was that the norm for national implementation was expected to be at least 50 per cent.

131. TSS-1 (now SPPD) was considered a successful feature of the support cost system and was linked with the resource assignment process of the successor programming arrangements. That enabled the resident representative to link agency technical services to the nature of programmes being developed. During the fifth cycle, it was also possible for agencies to utilize national expertise and to support national workshops to disseminate the results of the upstream studies carried out.

132. The President invited the representatives of agencies present to comment briefly on the issues raised. The representative from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) reported that the objectives of the support cost arrangements were being met as the involvement of FAO in project execution had dropped to one third of 1992 levels while involvement in

implementation under national execution had doubled in the same period. He emphasized that the modifications currently being proposed to the system did not compromise the basic principles and objectives but rather reinforced the focus and the demand-driven features. He added that FAO would, in any case, be maintaining the cost measurement system for its own internal needs.

133. The representative of the International Labour Organization also confirmed that the trend in agencies was to focus on technical support and less on the administrative side of projects and reiterated the need for UNDP and the agencies to enhance their strategic relationships. He also cautioned that in assessing different support cost rates it was a complex matter to ensure that cost-effectiveness was being measured on a comparable basis.

134. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/23. Agency support costs

The Executive Board

1. Requests the Administrator to prepare a conference room paper on the agency support costs system;

2. Decides that the Executive Board will consider the proposals contained in documents DP/1996/13 and DP/1995/49 and the additional information requested in paragraph 1 above at its annual session 1996.

29 March 1996

X. COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS: REPORTS ON MID-TERM REVIEWS

Overview

135. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support introduced document DP/1996/12, an overview of the reports on mid-term reviews, and DP/1996/12/Add.1-5, containing mid-term reviews of selected countries. The reports represented the fifth and last of a series of mid-term reviews of fifth cycle country and intercountry programmes undertaken during 1993 to 1995.

136. Fifth cycle country programmes had been consistent with the directives of Executive Board decisions 90/34 and 94/14 with respect to the UNDP areas of focus. The next set of country cooperation frameworks were expected to be even better focused on sustainable human development priorities. National execution remained the preferred modality for UNDP-assisted cooperation. Both the mid-term reviews and a formal evaluation of national execution in mid-1995 indicated that the modality was useful in addressing the broad UNDP goals of sustainability, capacity-building and cost-effectiveness. A simplified and coherent system of national execution based on decentralized programme management, including the participation of civil society organizations, was being developed for use by the end of 1996.

137. The widely adopted programme approach modality was useful in coordinating external cooperation and integrating it into national programmes. It had, however, been less successful as a tool for resource mobilization. Work was under way to simplify the programme support and programme implementation instruments and it was hoped that donors would be willing to support national programmes through the programme approach framework in the future. A new system-wide programme approach training module had been developed by the Turin Centre of the International Labour Organization.

138. Capacity development remained the central objective for the majority of UNDP-assisted programmes, a goal that would continue to be highlighted under the successor programming arrangements. UNDP would work closely with Governments to improve public service and incentive systems. The mid-term reviews indicated that the failure by most countries to develop and retain public sector capacity was directly related to low salaries and less-than-optimal service conditions in that sector.

139. The review also highlighted the importance of developing clear monitoring and review systems for UNDP-assisted programmes. The UNDP Office for Evaluation and Strategic Planning, with the regional bureaux, was developing a methodology for progress indicators and impact assessment.

140. Several delegations questioned why the report on mid-term reviews would be the last when there were still some reviews to be undertaken in 1996. It was also queried if the procedures for mid-term reviews were too complicated, leading to the delay in their completion. New review measures would need to be developed by UNDP for the next series of country cooperation frameworks. It was underlined that the present format, used since 1992, must be revised, with the suggestion that information on the four UNDP focus areas, programme impact, resource mobilization, and analysis of linkages among those factors be included.

141. One delegation underlined the importance of incorporating information on the impact and sustainability of country programmes in the mid-term reviews, as the sample mid-term reviews had very little analysis of the impact of the programmes in those countries. The documents were descriptive and included many statistics, but not enough analysis, in his country's view. Moreover, there was little discussion of multi-bi cooperation, except in the report on the mid-term review of Brazil (DP/1996/12/Add.4) in its reference to cost-sharing.

142. One delegation queried whether there had been any analysis of implementation of recommendations emanating from previous mid-term reviews. Another suggested that the country under review be invited to participate in the headquarters-based discussions of the mid-term review, an experience that had been successful in the past. Increased training opportunities for people in programme countries was also advocated. Capacity-building should be emphasized at all levels, including provincial and local.

143. Several delegations emphasized as a major criterion the need for evaluation of success in poverty eradication in country programmes. Capacity development was the key role of UNDP although it was noted that the report offered explanations on why there were constraints in achieving sustainable human development. However, UNDP programmes must aim to enrich the lives of the

poorest people, creating sustainability in a real sense. UNDP must have patience and courage to deal with poverty-stricken areas.

144. The reports demonstrated that problems were faced in implementing national execution and the programme approach, a factor on which there must be regular follow-up by the appropriate authorities in UNDP. The programme approach offered a coordinated framework and greater programme impact. One speaker stated that the programme approach needed to be implemented gradually, also stressing the lead role of the Government as a factor in more successful country programming.

145. While advocating the contribution of funds and technology by donors to boost use of the programme approach, one delegation acknowledged that it was not always a simple task, as was outlined in paragraph 25 of the overview. Increased effectiveness and coordination, including in technical cooperation among developing countries and through United Nations reform, needed to be demonstrated in order to attract sustainable funding by donors. It was suggested that UNDP undertake a study of the potential sustainability of multi-bi cooperation. Donor support went beyond fund-raising, in his Government's view, and the comparative advantages of each donor must be carefully studied.

146. More information was sought on the use and mobilization of non-core resources, specifically cost-sharing. It was advocated that terms of reference for use of that modality be developed. Some delegations queried the need, mentioned in paragraph 28 (b) of document DP/1996/12, for special administrative units with regard to national execution.

147. One delegation questioned whether the findings on the mid-term reviews on regional and interregional programmes would be incorporated and whether reviews would be conducted of UNDP programmes in Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, Zambia and the countries of Central Asia.

148. The Assistant Administrator underlined that the purpose of the mid-term reviews was to take stock of the relevance and direction of country programmes, with identification of problems and corrective action taken. Although the Executive Board had not requested a report on the 1996 mid-term reviews, it could be produced if requested. He emphasized the difficulty of conducting such a large number of reviews and the inability to conduct them in countries in special situations. He underlined the difficulty of analysing impact in reviews, as in some situations UNDP was not a major donor in the country, and often, impact, if discernable, was known only one or two years after the completion of the programme and not at the time of the mid-term review. UNDP was working with the World Bank and UNICEF to develop better indicators, particularly in the social sector.

149. He noted that an intercountry review had been presented to the Executive Board in September 1995, in which it had been concluded, among other things, that UNDP should make greater use of regional institutions and that regional and country programmes should be better linked. He noted that cost-sharing had not been widely utilized outside Latin America. An extensive review on the subject

would be presented to the Executive Board in the near future. In response to a query, he noted that gender mainstreaming was a key priority of UNDP.

150. The Executive Board took note of the overview of the reports on mid-term reviews (DP/1996/12).

Mid-term review of Mozambique (DP/1996/12/Add.1)

151. Many delegations took the floor to express their support for the successful work of UNDP in Mozambique and in particular for the strong coordinating role of the resident coordinator in what had been a particularly difficult period of transition in the country's history. It demonstrated that UNDP could operate effectively in changing circumstances.

152. The report reflected the situation in Mozambique quite well. It demonstrated that UNDP had focused its efforts in aid coordination successfully. Its work had given a positive impact in Mozambique's transition from conflict to reconstruction and development. Several delegations commended the resident coordinator for his chairing of the Aid-for-Democracy Working Group and his close working relationship with the World Bank. Some speakers referred to the positive comments they had received from their missions in Maputo regarding the work of UNDP. One delegation asked for an elaboration of "lessons learned" that could be applied in other countries.

153. Delegations supported the new areas of concentration mentioned in paragraph 13 of the document. Activities in the social sector, in particular in human resources development, were singled out for particular support. One delegation noted the valuable contribution of the United Nations Volunteers in Mozambique.

154. Questions were raised about the ambitious work plan elaborated in the document, progress on providing credit to rural communities, the use of technical support services (TSS-1 and TSS-2), and the pooling of resources in the health sector to provide untied technical cooperation. One delegation, speaking on behalf of another, urged faster implementation, increased national execution and improved capacity-building.

155. The Resident Representative in Mozambique, in response, underlined the important role that coordination had played in the country. However, it was difficult to measure the impact of UNDP activities in Mozambique at that juncture, given the volatility of the situation in recent years. That was a factor to consider in many different countries that were experiencing rapid change - least developed countries, countries with economies in transition, and those emerging from post-conflict situations. It would be necessary to develop a reasonable tool to measure impact in those cases. Moreover, evaluation of the success of national execution and the programme approach in Mozambique was particularly difficult. It could be useful for UNDP to review the given modalities in order to translate them into workable tools. Government ownership in Mozambique had been emphasized.

156. He pointed out that the mid-term review had included information only on the indicative planning figure (IPF) and cost-sharing, but not on co-financing.

He noted that in Mozambique, funding through trust fund arrangements had been more effective. Some $60-70 million had been financed through trust funds in Mozambique.

157. In answer to questions raised, the Resident Representative said a dialogue had begun on the provision of rural credits. With regard to the pooling of resources in the health sector, it was hoped that the modality would be expanded to other sectors in Mozambique and utilized in other countries. With regard to lessons learned in Mozambique, he underlined the need to commence dialogue in the international community early in emergency and post-emergency situations, as often the post-conflict situation demanded more stringent coordination. The TSS-1 and TSS-2 modalities would be reviewed. He agreed that the United Nations Volunteers had been quite instrumental in peace-building in Mozambique, an experience from which other countries could benefit.

158. The Executive Board took note of the mid-term review of Mozambique (DP/1996/12/Add.1).

Mid-term review of the fifth country programme for the Lao People's Democratic Republic (DP/1996/12/Add.2)

159. Appreciation was expressed for the role of UNDP and the Resident Coordinator in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, particularly in aid coordination. The comparative advantages of UNDP were well exemplified in the country programme. One delegation expressed an interest in exploring multi-bi cooperation with UNDP in the future, especially in terms of improving human resource development, in consideration of the Government's plans to join the Association of South-East Asian Nations in 1997. The same delegation requested UNDP to provide a proposal for the use of Capacity 21 funds in the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

160. A number of delegations expressed concern that the mid-term review report had not provided more detailed information on the impact of the UNDP programme. Several speakers echoed the call for strengthened human resource development in the country, in addition to the UNDP focus on poverty eradication, infrastructure development and economic reform. Several questions were posed regarding UNDP plans to cooperate in the hydropower sector, with some delegations noting that its development in the Lao People's Democratic Republic could have a negative impact on the local environment and on water management in neighbouring countries. One delegation advocated that the next round-table meeting for the country be held in the country itself rather than abroad. Another speaker asked for more information on rural development and UNDP work in strengthening local non-governmental organizations.

161. The Chief of the Country Office Support Division of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific responded to the points raised during the discussion. He noted that impact must be examined in two ways: by looking at the programme as a whole and by examining it at the project level. As the programme involved many donors, it was often difficult to attribute results to a particular donor, such as UNDP. Also difficult to measure was the impact of programmes in areas such as poverty eradication, particularly at the mid-point. At the project level, a full analysis of goals reached and sustainability was available in the

joint issues paper, which was summarized in the report before the Executive Board. Specific reports on the impact of cost-sharing arrangements in the Lao People's Democratic Republic were made available to donors as required. UNDP was working to strengthen the Government's capacity to prepare documentation for the next round-table meeting, to be held in November 1996. He noted that it was possible that the round-table meeting would indeed be held in the country although there was usually higher-level representation by donors when round-table meetings were held at a central point closer to donor capitals. Proposals would be submitted with respect to financing from the Capacity 21 fund. With regard to the concerns raised about UNDP involvement in hydropower, he informed the Executive Board that UNDP actively supported the Mekong Commission and that plans were under way for a workshop to be held in April 1996 in Bangkok on various aspects of the development of the Mekong Basin, including options for the development of hydropower. The workshop would include the participation of non-governmental organizations.

162. The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic expressed his country's gratitude to the Executive Board for the positive comments of the mid-term review. He noted the valuable cooperation of UNDP in helping his country to carry out economic reform. UNDP had also helped the development process in his country through the coordination of external assistance. A country strategy note had also been elaborated. He noted that rural development was one of the priority areas of his Government. Annual review meetings were planned for each year until 2000 between the Government and all United Nations bodies, led by UNDP, to assess the impact of United Nations programmes.

163. The Executive Board took note of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for the Lao People's Democratic Republic (DP/1996/12/Add.2).

Mid-term review of the first country programme for the Republic of Yemen (DP/1996/12/Add.3)

164. One delegation congratulated UNDP and its Resident Representative in Yemen for their flexible response to exceptional circumstances in the country. Another delegation asked that UNDP put forward a proposal for funding of activities in Yemen through Capacity 21.

165. The Executive Board took note of the mid-term review of the first country programme for the Republic of Yemen (DP/1996/12/Add.3).

Mid-term review of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Brazil (DP/1996/12/Add.4)

166. One delegation noted that the mid-term review of Brazil differed from the others presented to the Executive Board in that it frequently referred to the role of consultants in the preparation of the mid-term review and in activities related to the Government and non-governmental organizations. Also, more information on the impact of the programme was sought. Another delegation queried whether there was a role for UNDP in a World Bank-coordinated project on tropical forests. One delegation noted the positive work of UNDP in institutional support and capacity development.

167. The Programme Manager for Brazil of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean referred the Executive Board to paragraph 21 of the document, which examined the impact of the programme in Brazil. He noted, as others had, that it was difficult to discern a clear impact at the current stage. Since the format of future reports would be amended, as announced by the Assistant Administrator and Director, BPPS, the work of UNDP could be better reflected in a revised format. He explained that UNDP had engaged a team of consultants to obtain specific inputs to the mid-term review. He also noted that despite what seemed to be a high proliferation of projects, one quarter of the total number accounted for 90 per cent of the programme. UNDP was involved in the coordination of the Tropical Forestry Programme, and in that connection, a close collaboration with the World Bank would be established.

168. The representative of Brazil wished to clarify the work undertaken by the Government through the Brazilian Cooperation Agency with regard to the UNDP country programme. Referring to paragraph 29 of document DP/1996/12/Add.4, he noted that the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, through its Administrative Support Unit, undertook the central administration of all UNDP projects, which at that time numbered about 80, including all large-scale projects. With regard to paragraph 34, his Government attached great importance to the coordinating role of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency. Close links had been established by the Agency's Administrative Support Unit with the different Government sectors, including the Institute for Economic and Social Research and the Ministry of Planning. Referring to paragraph 40, the representative emphasized the importance his Government attached to promoting participation of different Government sectors and civil society in the formulation of UNDP projects, coordinated by the Cooperation Agency. His Government did recognize that for national execution there needed to be a central mechanism in the Federal Government in charge of the execution of the totality of the programme. The five years of experience of the Administrative Support Unit had been very successful in that regard. His Government was very much in agreement with UNDP regarding decentralization, a subject on which more discussion was welcomed.

169. The Executive Board took note of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Brazil (DP/1996/12/Add.4).

Mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Romania (DP/1996/12/Add.5)

170. The representative of Romania praised UNDP for the seriousness, openness and transparency of the mid-term review exercise. The work of UNDP in Romania was positive and had established a good image with civil society. The document revealed several key developments, including the commitment by the Government to continue and expand cooperation with UNDP in keeping with national priorities through the incorporation of the new vision and goals of UNDP. Ongoing projects focused on important areas such as human resource development, environment, energy and social safety nets. It was necessary to channel more resources to those areas. He noted the very relevant impact of the UNDP country programme in Romania. With regard to financing, the indicative planning figure was important in stimulating the process of co-financing. In that regard, he wished to thank several Governments for their co-financing of the programme in Romania. In expressing his Government's appreciation to the Administrator, the Associate Administrator, the Resident Coordinator in Romania, and the Regional Director,

he stated that his Government was ready to support the new vision of UNDP. The Resident Coordinator was thanked for the effectiveness in using the limited available resources. His delegation also looked forward to discussions on the implementation of the successor programming arrangements.

171. One delegation noted the excellent cooperation with the donor community in Romania and the overall success of the UNDP programme there. He called for increased national execution in Romania, given the high level of training and expertise among people of the country. He also noted the need for countries with economies in transition to cooperate among themselves, in areas such as privatization. Another delegation expressed support for UNDP work in human resources development in Romania and noted that the country would continue to operate under financial austerity.

172. The Executive Board approved the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Romania (DP/1996/12/Add.5).

Assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina

173. The Associate Administrator gave an oral progress report, as required by Executive Board decision 96/11, on UNDP assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

174. UNDP had established cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993: $600,000 had been allocated for the fifth programming cycle and the programme had been managed from headquarters. During an exploratory mission to the country in December 1995, UNDP had signed the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina. In its decision 96/11, the Associate Administrator recalled, the Executive Board had allocated $5 million in funding for Bosnia and Herzegovina and had approved the opening of a UNDP office in Sarajevo.

175. Since January 1996, the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States had held discussions with administrative and support units of UNDP to establish an office in Sarajevo. UNDP had agreed to establish the posts of Resident Representative, Deputy Resident Representative and Operations Manager for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Operations Manager was already present in Sarajevo, finalizing the arrangements to secure the necessary office space. UNDP had also allocated resources from the core budget for the recruitment of local staff for the office and to cover the initial costs of establishing the office, as well as its operating costs for 1996. All efforts were being made to share common services and premise costs with other United Nations agencies, and to procure, when possible, equipment from the United Nations at favourable prices. It was expected that the office would be operational by May 1996.

176. In March 1996, an inter-agency mission visited Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to establish a programming framework. The mission articulated development proposals that complemented the humanitarian and relief operations included in the consolidated appeal launched on 1 March 1996 and that were designed to assist in the process of rebuilding civil society in the medium term. Programmes would be undertaken at both the central and local levels and would assist national capacity-building for essential government institutions and the establishment of area-based development schemes. An aide-mémoire was being

concluded with the Governments (central Government, Bosniac/Croat Federation and Serbian Republic) outlining those agreements. UNDP would submit a multisectoral, medium-term development programme to donors later in the year.

177. The Bureau would ensure that all its programmes were coordinated with those of other multilateral and bilateral aid partners. UNDP stood ready to assume the lead role within the United Nations development system, under the overall guidance of the United Nations Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, appointed by the Secretary-General in February 1996. Through his office, UNDP would seek a coordinated dialogue with the Office of the High Representative.

178. The Associate Administrator thanked the Government of Japan for its generous contribution of $30.9 million for the UNDP programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He also thanked the Governments of Austria and Italy for their positive contributions.

179. The representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina thanked UNDP and the Executive Board for their assistance to his country. He encouraged UNDP to establish its presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina as early as possible. Its cooperative efforts were much valued as a contribution to the reconstruction of the country and its priorities of strengthening civil society, resettling refugees and helping to return displaced persons to their homes. He expressed his country's gratitude to the Governments of Japan, Austria and Italy for their contributions.

180. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for UNDP assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina. They stressed the urgency of developing a full-fledged programme and establishing a fully staffed office. It was important for UNDP to focus on particular areas where it had a comparative advantage, in particular in the social and developmental aspects, and in coordination with donors. More clarity on the UNDP role was sought.

181. The Associate Administrator responded that the urgency to set up the office was shared by UNDP. Both the Resident Representative and Deputy Resident Representative had been selected. He offered to share with interested delegations the report of the programming mission, which gave more details on prospective areas of focus of UNDP involvement. Given the many international actors in the country, UNDP understood the critical need for coordination.

182. The Executive Board took note of the oral progress report on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

XI. FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

183. The Administrator introduced the item, including conference room papers prepared for the session, and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (DP/1996/25).

184. He emphasized the importance of the work of the Office of United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS) in providing support for the entire United

Nations system in overseeing the strengthening of the resident coordinator function. It was difficult to draw a sharp separation between the responsibilities of UNDP itself and of UNDP acting on behalf of the United Nations system with regard to the resident coordinator system. He underlined that UNDP had responsibility for the overall management and funding of the resident coordinator.

185. With reference to the ACABQ report, he wished to provide clarification of some of the issues raised. An organizational chart of OUNS was distributed for the information of delegations. The Division for Resident Coordinator System Support developed the guidelines for managing the allocations of resources to support countries in special situations and to support the resident coordinator on the successor programming arrangements. The function of resident coordinator support, formerly administered by the United Nations Department for Programme Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD), had been transferred to UNDP and was financed by UNDP. The triennial policy review undertaken in 1995 had shown that one half of the time of resident coordinators was spent on resident coordinator functions. That leadership role, which included the role of humanitarian coordinator in most countries confronting or emerging from crisis must continue to be strengthened. Another key function of the resident coordinator was to assist Governments in the coordination of external assistance. The latter category was included in line 1.1.3 of the successor programming arrangements. The necessary backstopping for fulfilment of this function was provided by OUNS.

186. Secondly, the Division for Policy Advisory Services of OUNS provided support for the responsibilities he had undertaken at the request of the Secretary-General in his role as Special Coordinator for Economic and Social Development. Recent activities undertaken by the Division had included support of the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa and an action plan for supporting country-level operations on the integrated follow-up to international conferences.

187. The Division also provided the support for and follow-up to formal and informal meetings of the senior officials in the economic and social sectors, which he chaired in his capacity as Special Coordinator, on behalf of the Secretary-General. The Division worked to develop the United Nations system as a strong and integrated force for sustainable human development.

188. The Directorate of OUNS was headed by a Director, at the D-2 level, who also served as Deputy United Nations Security Coordinator. He noted that it was not unusual for a D-2 to report to another D-2, as was the case in OUNS. Moreover, the requisite number of D-2 posts had not been exceeded. As regards the ratio of Professional level to General Service level posts, questioned in the ACABQ report, he explained that some of the General Service staff performed para-professional work. He underlined that OUNS was well organized and provided vital service to the United Nations. It implemented mandates of the Executive Board and was consistent with the budget strategy. In addition, other parts of the United Nations system were participating in OUNS through secondments, which were welcomed by UNDP.

189. The Administrator underlined the good relationship with DPCSD and the bridge provided through his role as Special Coordinator to all the United Nations departments, funds and programmes. He expected this to create a stronger link between development and relief, as well as strengthened ties with the Bretton Woods institutions.

190. One delegation, also speaking on behalf of another, recalled the provisions of paragraph 35 of Executive Board decision 95/28, and wished to draw attention to paragraph 7 of the ACABQ report, which referred to paragraph 38 of General Assembly resolution 50/120, in which funds and programmes were invited to support the resident coordinator function. More information was needed on the follow-up to that provision. In principle, the speaker, later supported by others, agreed with the comment by ACABQ, which recommended that system-wide coordination at the headquarters level be financed by the United Nations regular budget to ensure no diversion of funding from operational activities. One delegation stated that it considered that all activities outlined in one of the conference room papers could be financed by UNDP.

191. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for the clarifications provided by the Administrator on the questions raised in the ACABQ report. They acknowledged that some of the points raised by ACABQ, such as the funding of United Nations coordination support functions, could not be directly addressed by the Executive Board and should be addressed by the Fifth Committee.

192. One delegation, speaking also on behalf of another, raised questions about the chain of command in OUNS and the need to enhance the support from other funds and programmes. He thanked the Administrator for the clarifications provided in his oral and written reports. He stressed that the Office must be owned by the United Nations system and linked to coordination efforts. The stated ratio of resident coordinator time used for resident coordinator functions vis-à-vis UNDP functions was of concern.

193. Another delegation suggested that the proposal regarding OUNS be approved on a provisional basis. Several delegations expressed support for the new functions of the Administrator as Special Coordinator and of OUNS in supporting his role.

194. A number of delegations, in recognizing the key role played by OUNS, expressed support for system-wide staffing inputs to the Office and further clarification of the respective roles of UNDP and DPCSD in terms of coordination of headquarters departments. The role of UNDP in country-level coordination was affirmed. Further clarification of the roles was requested.

195. One delegation emphasized the need to clarify the mandate of the resident coordinator in cases where the humanitarian coordinator was from a different organization. Strengthened directives for the work of the resident coordinator and more support from specialized agencies at the country level would be welcomed.

196. There was broad support expressed for the final allocation of the five posts referred to in paragraphs 13 and 14 of Executive Board decision 95/28, as proposed by the Administrator.

197. In response to the comments raised in the discussion, the Administrator emphasized the importance of having an organization dedicated to the success of the entire United Nations system. In terms of financing, he stated that the tasks relating to system-wide coordination carried out by OUNS such as integrated follow-up to conferences and the Special Initiative for Africa, were of specific relevance to operational activities and should not be funded out of the regular budget of the United Nations.

198. He appreciated the comments made by delegations regarding secondments and support for the resident coordinator system. In response to concerns raised about the time spent on resident coordinator matters, he stated that he interpreted the work undertaken in that regard to be an integral part of the development function. He did not see a conflict in the roles of UNDP and DPCSD. He noted that the issues raised could relate to the responsibilities included in his role as Special Coordinator and how they pertained to DPCSD, as the Department was one of the participants in the consultations among Senior Officials for which he was responsible.

199. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/21. UNDP: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

The Executive Board

1. Recalls its decision 95/28 on the revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 of the United Nations Development Programme, including paragraphs 13-14 and 34-37;

2. Takes note of the information provided at the current session by the Administrator, and of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (DP/1996/25) as well as of the statement of the Administrator;

3. Takes note of the final allocation of five posts (paragraphs 13 and 14 of Executive Board decision 95/28) as proposed by the Administrator;

4. Requests the Administrator to report to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996 on efforts to follow up on General Assembly resolution 50/120 on the triennial policy review, in particular paragraph 38 thereof, in which the General Assembly invited the United Nations system, including the funds and programmes, specialized agencies and the secretariat, to provide, as appropriate, support to the resident coordinator system, in view of the fact that the Office of United Nations System Support and Services is serving as the focal point in support of the resident coordinator system;

5. Requests the Administrator to review, as appropriate, the proposed organizational structure of the Office of United Nations System Support and Services, taking into account the comments made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and to report thereon at its third regular session 1996, in the context of the report on the revised budget estimates;

6. Decides in view of the issues raised in paragraphs 4-5 above, to approve on a provisional basis the proposal relating to the Office of United Nations System Support and Services as contained in paragraphs 164-166 of document DP/1995/51;

7. Requests the Administrator, in the context of paragraph 6 above, to bear in mind the necessity of further clarification on the financing of the responsibility given by the Secretary-General to the Administrator for improving the coordination of operational activities for development as well as the ongoing reform process of operational activities;

8. Requests the Administrator to bring the present decision to the attention of the funds and programmes, specialized agencies, and United Nations Secretariat.

29 March 1996

XII. EVALUATION

200. The Administrator reported on developments that had taken place in UNDP since the first regular session 1996. He noted that regional meetings of resident representatives/resident coordinators had been held for Africa, the Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean. He had visited 12 programme countries, including five of the Gulf States, and six donor countries, the latter with the purpose of mobilizing core resources. Also taking place during the past few months had been efforts to move major programming guidelines forward. A meeting of senior management to discuss the UNDP reform process had been held from 21 to 24 February 1996. Also of special note was the formulation of an integrated United Nations action plan for follow up on the outcome of United Nations conferences and the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. The reassignment exercise had also been concluded.

201. The Administrator requested the Executive Board to examine the possibility of rationalizing the frequency and composition of its meetings with UNDP in order to maximize dialogue on substantive issues.

202. The Director of the Office for Evaluation and Strategic Planning (OESP), in presenting the report of the Administrator on evaluation (DP/1996/14), welcomed the opportunity to continue the dialogue with the Executive Board regarding the role of evaluation in helping UNDP become a more effective and accountable learning organization.

203. She highlighted the achievements of OESP and the challenges ahead, noting in particular strategic evaluations conducted, dissemination of lessons learned and the expected availability to country offices of the evaluation central database by the end of 1996. New evaluation guidelines would be also be issued in 1996. Compliance and the scope of the 1996 work programme presented challenges. On the issue of compliance, OESP was proposing to institute two new measures: presentation of an annual compliance report to the Executive Board

and identification in the 1996-1997 corporate plan of the full programme of mandatory evaluations.

204. The tentative work programme for OESP for 1996 would continue to address the most vital issues, covering strategic evaluations as well as regular evaluations, including those of country programmes. It also addressed important methodological work, including the finalization of new guidelines needed to make the transition to the programme approach and to the successor programming arrangements. There would be an integrated process to deal with monitoring, evaluation and planning. Another key innovation would be the finalization of the programme impact and performance assessment system. The 1996 workplan also foresaw support activities for the development of national monitoring and evaluation capacity, the continuation of collaboration on harmonization and other substantive issues arising from the triennial comprehensive policy review with various intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies dealing with evaluation.

205. The Director of OESP concluded that UNDP would become a more accountable learning organization by supporting dynamic linkages between evaluation and key strategic initiatives that repositioned the organization as a more knowledge-based organization.

206. Fulfilling that vision would require strong commitment by management, especially with respect to monitoring, evaluation compliance and the use of feedback.

207. Several delegations expressed their appreciation to the Administrator for his presence and for the information he provided on the activities of UNDP since the first regular session 1996 and especially the developments concerning the reform process in the organization.

208. Many speakers also thanked the Director of OESP for her presentation and the information presented to the Executive Board, which included the evaluation compliance report and the tentative workplan for evaluation activities in 1996.

209. The ensuing discussions stressed the importance given by members of the Board to the monitoring and evaluation function. Some members emphasized the advantages of the link between evaluation and strategic planning and underscored the linkages between evaluation, quality service and control as well as performance. They also recognized the work undertaken by UNDP with programme countries to increase the capacity for evaluation. Several delegations commended the efforts made by UNDP to improve the quality of evaluations and to make the function a priority throughout the organization.

210. The issues and questions were answered directly by the Director of OESP. The major issues were: confidence between UNDP and the Executive Board; compliance; procedures and criteria used in evaluation; reporting; dissemination of lessons learned and feedback mechanisms; integration of evaluation in the new successor programming arrangements; and the commitment of the senior management to evaluation and monitoring.

211. Confidence. One delegation raised the issue of confidence of programme and donor countries towards the work being done in evaluation. Five points were

raised: (a) examination of focus areas in evaluations; (b) sufficiency of evaluations; (c) degrees of lessons learned; (d) building an evaluation culture in UNDP; and (e) generation of information on findings.

212. Another delegation cautioned that the nature of technical cooperation made it difficult to evaluate the work of UNDP since the notion of impact was conditional to extraneous factors. In that context, the question of confidence had to be examined in relation to clear expectations from donor and programme countries.

213. In her response, the Director of OESP recalled the various initiatives taken by UNDP to bring to the Executive Board concerns about evaluation, to increase transparency and to work in collaboration with other organizations. She recognized that more work was needed to put in place systems generating adequate information about the learning process.

214. Information presented to the Executive Board included: the statistical analysis prepared by the former Central Evaluation Office and presented to the Board on a biennial basis; the 1993 feedback study, which highlighted the lack of sufficient attention paid to evaluation; the presentation by OESP to the Board in 1995 of the paper entitled "Rethinking Evaluation"; the OESP publication series on lessons learned, and the issuance of the compliance report. In addition, she noted that OESP worked closely in matters of evaluation and monitoring with other organizations and countries such as the Swedish International Development Agency, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Netherlands, Norway and Japan. At the United Nations system level, UNDP was chairing the Inter-Agency Working Group on evaluation and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy working group on harmonization. Within the tripartite arrangement, all evaluations conducted by UNDP at the programme and project level involved other organizations. In fulfilling its mandate of building capacity for monitoring and evaluation, OESP was working with 30 developing countries and had published monographs on the monitoring and evaluation systems of 17 countries.

215. The Director of OESP added that evaluations in OESP met all the required standards with respect to independence. To the question whether UNDP was learning enough through evaluations, the Director gave the example of the evaluation of the energy sector, whose recommendations provided a platform for the promulgation of a new policy by the Sustainable Energy and Environment Division (SEED). The selection of topics to be evaluated was made by OESP in consultation with management. Some of the evaluations were mandated by the Executive Board and the Director welcomed suggestions for the inclusion of evaluations in the 1996 work programme.

216. Compliance. With regard to compliance, many speakers welcomed the issuance of the OESP report on the subject as a step towards increased transparency in reporting. Some delegations were concerned about the reasons why full compliance had not been achieved and requested some explanations on the differences in compliance rates for the various regions. The case of the Latin American region was singled out because of the sharp decline in the compliance rate between 1988 and 1989. The delegations also sought clarification on the methodology used for the compilation of statistical information in the

compliance report. One delegation pointed out a discrepancy between the overall compliance rate given in the report (52 per cent) and the figure given in the report to the Board of Auditors (80 per cent). Some suggested the extension of mandatory evaluations to projects with budgets below $1 million.

217. The Director of OESP acknowledged that current compliance rates were not at an acceptable level. The system to monitor compliance was in place, however, and enforcement had remained an issue. The issuance of the compliance report had brought the problem to the attention of Senior Management, who was now requesting the regional bureaux to provide explanations for their rates of compliance. The issue would be dealt with through the corporate plan and managers would be held accountable through the performance appraisal review system.

218. The Director noted that the sharp decline in the compliance rate in the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean between 1988 and 1989 coincided with very low indicative planning figures in the region, following the overall reduction at the beginning of the fifth programming cycle, the decline being explained by a shift in priorities towards resource mobilization. The discrepancy between the figures contained in the report of the Board of Auditors and the compliance report were explained by the fact that compliance was considered in the strictest sense for the compliance report. The Director announced that OESP would be available to discuss the compliance report in depth with the members of the Executive Board after the session.

219. Procedures and criteria used in evaluation. Two queries were raised on the existence of criteria at the project/programme design level to accommodate evaluations and on the type of criteria used to select specific evaluations. Two delegations also raised the issue of criteria for impact measurement.

220. The Director of OESP responded that in all programme and project evaluations, the inclusion of sustainable human development indicators and capacity development indicators were mandatory. For strategic evaluations, timeliness was a determining factor in selection. Impact measurement was being addressed through the programme impact and performance assessment system. The Office was also undertaking a joint study with the Swedish International Development Agency on the subject.

221. Reporting. Delegations expressed their expectation that a new reporting format would allow for the elaboration of clear policy guidance by the Executive Board. Some delegations felt that reporting on evaluation should be consolidated to include a yearly annual report, evaluation findings, compliance report and the workplan for evaluation; others suggested that reporting should address implementation issues. Two delegations requested that specific case studies as well as action taken be included in the report. On the programme of work for 1996, two delegations suggested the inclusion of a specific evaluation on the impact of the unpredictability of UNDP resources on the development programme of recipient countries. There was a consensus that dialogue between the Executive Board and UNDP should be strengthened on the issue of reporting. Two delegations proposed that OESP report directly to the Executive Board on major evaluations.

222. Elaborating on the number of possible levels of reporting, the Director of OESP reiterated that OESP needed clear guidance from the Executive Board in order to prepare an annual report that would meet expectations. The timing of the report for submission at the annual session rather than at the second session would allow OESP to compile more complete information. The Director also agreed that results of strategic evaluation would be presented to the Board.

223. Dissemination of lessons learned and feedback mechanisms. Three delegations stressed the importance of the feedback mechanism to incorporate lessons learned in programming. They requested an explanation of the relationship between OESP, the regional bureaux, country offices, executing agencies and Governments and how they worked together in providing feedback and lessons learned. While recognizing the complexity of monitoring the inclusion of evaluation recommendations into programming and execution, the Executive Board members encouraged UNDP to pursue their effort in that area and to continue to improve feedback mechanisms. Some delegations had questions on the availability to recipient countries of evaluation results.

224. The Director of OESP committed to providing detailed information of the decentralized system of evaluation within UNDP. On the availability of evaluation results, she confirmed that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee database was accessible to all countries and that the UNDP evaluation database would be accessible to programme countries by December 1996. In addition, evaluation lessons would be available on Internet.

225. Integration of lessons learned into successor programming arrangements. Several delegations stressed the importance of evaluation in the context of the successor programming arrangements.

226. Commitment of Senior Management to evaluation and monitoring. Three delegations emphasized the critical role of UNDP Senior Management in ensuring that evaluation and monitoring be given proper recognition at all levels in the organization.

227. One delegation suggested that evaluation and monitoring should become key objectives in the next organizational plan. Questions on the commitment of senior management to evaluation and monitoring were directed to the Administrator.

228. The Administrator reaffirmed his total confidence in OESP to deal with issues at hand and asserted that he was committed to addressing the shortcomings highlighted by the Executive Board. The highest level of compliance would be sought and staff would be directly accountable. High standards of evaluation would be applied with core resources as well as co-financing. Feedback mechanisms would be reinforced to ensure that results of evaluation had a direct bearing on programming and policy. The Administrator also requested the Executive Board to reconfirm the organizational location and structure of OESP by keeping together the evaluation and the strategic planning functions.

229. On the issue of donor confidence, the Administrator underlined the fact that all institutions were now being challenged to demonstrate effectiveness and results and that evaluation was one way of ensuring that results were achieved.

230. Closing remarks were made by the Director of OESP, who thanked the Executive Board for the importance attached to evaluation and welcomed the opportunity of a continuous dialogue to improve the quality of evaluations in UNDP.

231. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/20. UNDP evaluation

The Executive Board

1. Recognizes the importance of evaluation and monitoring as mechanisms providing information on the operational progress and impact of United Nations Development Programme activities for all participants in the activities of the Programme, for all Programme staff and for the Executive Board;

2. Stresses the fundamental importance of feeding back the lessons of monitoring and evaluation into planning and management in order to improve continually the quality of the organization's output, and the need for this concept to be shared by all its staff;

3. Requests the Administrator, in this context, and through the mechanism of the organizational plan, to ensure that evaluation and monitoring are firmly established in the management culture of the United Nations Development Programme by, inter alia:

(a) Raising the profile of accountability and of staff and programme performance monitoring and evaluation in the Programme so that all its divisions recognize its vital importance;

(b) Reviewing and revising as necessary, and in the light of "initiatives for change" and the successor programming arrangements, the systems and criteria for selecting subjects for evaluation; the handling in evaluations of the Programme's operational implementation of its areas of focus; opportunities for joint evaluations with other United Nations bodies; and the actions required of Programme personnel, including clear objective-setting at all levels;

(c) Linking compliance with monitoring and evaluation procedures with the Programme's personnel management and reporting systems;

(d) Reporting the results of strategic evaluations to the Executive Board;

4. Calls upon the Administrator to ensure that evaluation work has the necessary degree of independence to carry out objective evaluations; and to report to the Executive Board at its annual session 1997 on progress made on the implementation of the present decision.

29 March 1996

XIII. ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

232. The Associate Administrator introduced the report of the Administrator on the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP) (DP/1996/15), noting that the past year had been one of great expansion, change and adaptation to the evolving situation in the region.

233. Four elements of the report were highlighted by the Associate Administrator. First, the ability of UNDP to provide quick delivery in priority areas for the Palestinian Authority, the donor community and UNDP. It had resulted in an expansion of the programme's technical, engineering and programming staff, both in Gaza and the West Bank. One concrete example of the mechanism was the employment and income-generation programme. A second factor was the generosity of the international donor community, with virtually all of the $34 million in expenditures in 1995 coming from bilateral agencies, the United Nations Capital Development Fund and UNFPA. It was estimated that $46 million in expenditures would come from the same sources in 1996. The Associate Administrator thanked the Government of Japan, in particular, for its significant financial support and collaboration with regard to the programme. Support from donors had enabled the programme to become largely self-financing.

234. A third element was the completion in mid-1995 of a programme framework covering 1996-1998. The document, which emphasized institution-building, the empowerment and advancement of women, environment, and sustainable livelihoods through employment-generating public works programmes, had the full endorsement of the Palestinian Authority. A programme of at least $94 million was envisaged for the three-year period.

235. A final point concerned the participation of the programme in coordination, including the Consultative Group meetings for the West Bank and Gaza, and the Working Group meetings in the multilateral process. UNDP had also supported the Local Area Coordinating Committees, established by the United Nations Special Coordinator.

236. The representative of Palestine expressed his appreciation to UNDP for the work of PAPP and to the Associate Administrator for inaugurating the office in Gaza. While an international success story was being hailed, his authorities wished to underline the destruction in the economic and social sector in the Occupied Territories as a result of Israeli actions. In particular, he called on Israel to reverse the decision to close its borders, which was preventing the movement of persons and goods. With regard to the work of UNDP in Gaza and the West Bank, UNDP core resources to PAPP should be increased, given the self-financing nature of the Programme. He acknowledged with thanks the financial

contributions of a number of Governments for their support to PAPP and urged the international community to increase its contributions.

237. Another delegation welcomed a recent agreement between UNDP and his Government to provide technical cooperation to developing countries. He noted that the Executive Board must discuss how best to implement the policies contained in the report. He cited the intervention by the previous speaker, which had included political issues that were not relevant to the discussion by the Board. The closure of his country's borders was not intended to hurt the economy in Gaza and the West Bank, but rather to provide security and preventing terrorists from entering his country. He stated that the delivery of food, building materials and textiles had been allowed. His Government hoped that the international community would eradicate terrorism. He encouraged UNDP to provide assistance to the Palestinian people and to promote increased cooperation.

238. Many delegations expressed support for the report and the role of PAPP, in particular in job creation and income generation. Close cooperation with other international organizations in providing assistance was encouraged. The Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programme was cited as a good example of the broad contribution of UNDP. The self-financing nature of PAPP was widely supported by speakers, with some suggesting that it could serve as an example for other programmes. Delegations were pleased to see the emphasis on productive assets and outputs in the report. Good coordination and positive inputs had contributed to the peace process.

239. Several speakers requested an increase in the core resources earmarked for PAPP under the successor programming arrangements.

240. The Associate Administrator noted that self-financing was only possible if UNDP was able to spend what it received. At the present time, expenditures had slowed and there was some difficulty in ensuring that the programming in the pipeline was carried out. With regard to an increase in core resources, he explained that the core budget contribution was $4 million per annum for 1997 and 1998, earmarked from line 1.1.3. That represented almost a doubling of the fifth programming cycle resources of $2.1 million per annum. If the funding of PAPP had been earmarked from lines 1.1.1 and 1.1.2, the notional figure for 1997 and 1998 would have been $600,000 per annum.

241. The Director of the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People underlined the high priority of UNDP on employment and job creation, and noted the recent contributions of the Governments of Japan, Norway and Sweden of $11.5 million for activities in job creation.

242. The Special Representative of PAPP in Jerusalem stated that UNDP would use the programme as a model for future decentralized activities. He underlined the need to utilize cost-effective modalities such as the TOKTEN programme. One of the goals of PAPP was to build bridges to all countries in the region, particularly in the agricultural sector. He noted that it was not always possible to keep to sustainable human development criteria in implementing the programme because of its activities in providing wages for work by unemployed

persons. With the support of donors, he hoped that changes could be implemented to avoid red tape in implementing the Programme's development work.

243. One delegation thanked the Associate Administrator for his explanation of how core resources were allocated to PAPP. He explained that the draft decision would maintain the request to increase core resources if it was possible. Another delegation supported the flexible formula on financing, and underlined the need for UNDP not to divert resources earmarked for PAPP to other regional projects.

244. One delegation asked for clarification about the source of any proposed increase in funding for PAPP from core resources and suggested that the text of the draft decision include a reference to the resources coming from line 1.1.3. Another delegation noted that confirmation had already been given by the secretariat that line 1.1.3 would be the source of additional resources for PAPP.

245. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/19. Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator (DP/1996/15);

2. Requests the Administrator to envisage increasing the core resources of the United Nations Development Programme allocated to the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People under the future arrangements for the period 1997-1998;

3. Encourages the international donor community to continue its high level of contributions to the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People and to take full advantage of the Programme's well-tested implementation and delivery capacities.

29 March 1996

246. During the approval of the overview decision, one delegation asked for clarification as to why a proposal for inclusion of language regarding the source of additional funding to be earmarked as coming from line 1.1.3 had not been included in the text of decision 96/19, as it had been her understanding that the inclusion had been agreed upon. Another delegation, who had been chairing the meeting during the session in which the decision had been adopted, explained that it was his understanding that the explanation offered by the secretariat had provided assurance that the only source of increased core funding for PAPP could be line 1.1.3. One delegation noted that the guidelines for line 1.1.3 were not yet available. As the decision had already been approved, the Executive Board agreed to note that the source of any increased funding from core resources for PAPP would be line 1.1.3 of the successor programming arrangements.

XIV. OTHER MATTERS

Draft report of the Secretary-General on internal oversight mechanisms

247. The Officer-in-charge of the Office of Internal Oversight Services introduced the draft report of the Secretary-General on enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes (DP/1996/16). He noted that the statement made by the Under-Secretary General for Internal Oversight Services to an informal session of the Executive Board on 11 March 1996 was available.

248. The mandate for the report had been given to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/218 B, through which had also established the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The purpose was to elaborate on how OIOS could assist operational funds and programmes in enhancing their internal oversight mechanisms. The Office had taken stock of the current oversight mechanisms, and based on its findings, made eight recommendations, which were included in the report. If found acceptable, the recommendations would extend the concept of internal oversight as defined in General Assembly resolution 48/218 B to the operational funds and programmes.

249. Continuing, the Officer-in-charge of OIOS outlined a number of elements in the concept of internal oversight, as defined by the General Assembly. Feedback from Member States had been generally positive. The concept of OIOS was not alien to operational funds and programmes as OIOS already provided its services entirely or in part to eight of them, and the remaining five, including UNDP and UNFPA, handled their own oversight functions.

250. Moreover, there was a solid basis for successful cooperation and coordination among all oversight units of operational funds and programmes, owing to a number of recent developments. Internal auditing standards for all United Nations organizations had been approved; many operational funds and programmes would be serviced by the Integrated Management Information System, which would require unified procedures in audits of salaries and allowances, procurement, accounts and financial statements, and budget allotments; and already existing cooperation in some oversight mechanisms.

251. OIOS maintained that there was a need to formalize cooperation among oversight services of operational funds and programmes on a legislated, regular and solid basis, which would be supported by each organization's management. While internal oversight mechanisms of funds and programmes differed from one another, organizational arrangements such as audit and evaluation functions were equally viable. He noted that there was more diversity in monitoring and inspection, and almost no experience among agencies in investigations.

252. The underlying concept in the draft report was to preserve the established oversight functions that existed in the organizations, while introducing additional mechanisms and procedures that have proven useful to OIOS and that were necessary for a modern and effective internal oversight service. On reporting lines, the draft report recommended that in addition to an annual report from the oversight unit to the governing body of its organization, a report could also be issued directly to the General Assembly.

253. One delegation underlined the need for strong and effective oversight mechanisms in United Nations funds and programmes, particularly during a time of tightening budgets. With the adoption of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B, sound oversight elements such as auditing, monitoring, evaluation, inspection and investigation, must become integral features of accountability for all funds and programmes. That delegation expressed strong endorsement of the eight recommendations contained in the draft report. The draft report was an excellent framework for strengthening internal oversight and the modalities of the relationship between OIOS and the funds and programmes. In particular, the delegation recommended: more emphasis on monitoring, which was perceived as especially weak; concise and informative reports on oversight to the Executive Board and specific information on oversight as part of the annual report of OIOS to the General Assembly, with comments by OIOS on the input from funds and programmes; reliance of funds and programmes on OIOS for assistance in investigations; and the prompt, direct and unimpeded access for OIOS to all records, documents and other materials of funds and programmes.

254. A number of delegations expressed appreciation for the report and noted their expectation that the recommendations would lead to improved harmonization in the oversight procedures of funds and programmes and would enhance communication between the United Nations and the governing bodies of funds and programmes. One delegation emphasized the importance of effective oversight mechanisms for the overall functioning of United Nations funds and programmes and for the elimination of waste and inefficiency. In that context, the delegation noted the timeliness and pertinence of the draft report and also expressed satisfaction that the United Nations funds and programmes, including UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, had correctly provided emphasis on management and performance audits over financial audits in their long-established internal audit functions. One delegation welcomed the opportunity to comment on the report in its draft form and stated that although viable current oversight arrangements need not be changed, a coherent system should be established.

255. Several delegations stressed that the Executive Board must not be circumvented in the reporting line and hence must review any reports that dealt with internal oversight mechanisms in funds and programmes. It was suggested that the report of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS to the Board on internal oversight also include the text of the report which was to be submitted as part of the report of the Secretary-General on oversight mechanisms in United Nations funds and programmes in order for the Board to provide comments to that input. It was also recommended that the report to the General Assembly on oversight in funds and programmes be submitted through the Economic and Social Council.

256. One delegation questioned the reference in paragraph 37 of the draft report of the Secretary-General to the suggestion that funds and programmes should have a reporting line through OIOS to the General Assembly on internal oversight. That, the representative noted, would circumvent the accountability of the Executive Board. It should be sufficient that the Board report to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council. He further stated that preparation by OIOS of a report on oversight issues, as contained in recommendation 7 of the draft report, would be duplicative since an annual report on oversight by the fund or programme would suffice. In addition, recommendation 8, under which OIOS would have the authority to seek and obtain

information from the internal oversight entities at the executive head level and to comment on the quality and adequacy of oversight activities of funds and programmes as they would be reported to the General Assembly following recommendation number 7, seemed to be well beyond what was required to achieve enhancement and coordination in the area. He emphasized that any second tier of reporting on internal oversight in UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS would circumvent their accountability to the Executive Board.

257. Questions were raised about the procedure involved in commenting on the draft report. Several delegations suggested that more discussion was needed by the Executive Board before coming to a decision. The recommendations could have been made after Board review rather than before. Some supported taking note of the report while seeking further clarification of any inadequacies in oversight functions in funds and programmes. In order to support fully the recommendations, the Board would need full information on the effectiveness of service provided by the internal oversight units, leading to more integrated and consolidated action. For example, the draft report needed to elaborate further on the classification of small and large entities to determine the viability of establishing of integral oversight units. Moreover, without a complete analysis of the performance of the existing internal oversight services in funds and programmes, it was difficult to pinpoint areas needing strengthening either internally or with direct assistance from OIOS. With reference to paragraphs 26, 27 and 28 of the draft report, one delegation questioned why the existing machinery had not allowed for enquiries and investigations when necessary. Another delegation expressed concern about the resource implications of the report and inquired whether additional funds would be necessary. The delegation also pointed out that the report would have to be seen in light of the ambiguities contained in General Assembly resolution 48/218 B.

258. One delegation introduced a draft decision, as orally amended, underlining the importance of oversight mechanisms to the General Assembly as well as to the Executive Boards of funds and programmes. One delegation expressed the view that any decision of the Executive Board should only endorse those recommendations of the draft report that aimed at strengthening the internal oversight function in the funds and programmes.

259. The Officer-in-charge of OIOS thanked the Executive Board for its extensive analysis and comments. The challenge for the Office was to provide better services and handle increasing appeals to improve internal controls within existing resources. The draft report of the Secretary-General on internal oversight in funds and programmes would take into account the positions of the different Executive Boards of funds and programmes. He noted that one comparative advantage of OIOS was its presence in different geographical areas, including attachment to United Nations peacekeeping operations. That meant the availability of immediate dispatch from regional centres to any locations when problems arose. He also suggested that reciprocity could be utilized if funds and programmes had auditors present in a particular region. He also underlined that the present draft report was an initial step in closer coordination between OIOS and the oversight mechanisms in funds and programmes. The Office did not have a mandate to assess the internal oversight mechanisms of funds and programmes. He also noted that the process included the opportunity for mutual feedback and sharing of experiences between the United Nations and the funds and

programmes. The goal was to establish legislated cooperation and coordination. Sounder assessment of oversight services was the next step. With regard to reporting, he noted that the Office submitted information for the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on OIOS, with statistical information on the number of audits and evaluations, and information on results and structure of recommendations, as well as on assessment of the status of internal controls. Member States had been enthusiastic about those reporting arrangements; hence, a similar format and concept was suggested for internal oversight functions in funds and programmes.

260. The Director of the UNDP Division of Audit and Management Review stated that UNDP had been concerned about the governance issues referred to in the draft report, in particular reporting which would bypass the Executive Board. He noted the usefulness of an annual report to the Board on internal oversight in UNDP as a means of facilitating discussion with the Board in that important area. He also stated that while UNDP had a relatively large audit function, it was not visualized that separate units within that structure would be created. The statements made by delegations in support of reporting arrangements through the Board to the Economic and Social Council were welcomed by UNDP.

261. The Deputy Executive Director for Policy and Administration of UNFPA stated that the Fund was keenly aware of the importance of oversight mechanisms to ensure accountability. The draft report and oral statements had been very useful. UNFPA had long prioritized the strengthening of its evaluation, monitoring and audit functions under the Fund's policy of decentralization. He welcomed the results of the discussion in the Executive Board regarding the clarification of reporting arrangements and noted that it would be useful for delegations to consider the unique characteristics of small organizations such as UNFPA with regard to oversight.

262. One delegation emphasized the need in future discussions on the subject to involve the Executive Board fully. It was also essential that the reporting line be from the Board to the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly.

263. Following discussions in an informal session, the Executive Board decided not to adopt a decision on oversight services in funds and programmes. It was agreed that an annual report of UNDP/UNFPA/OPS on internal oversight would be presented to the Executive Board on a yearly basis, beginning in 1997. The Board decided to convey the results of the discussion on the subject held at the present session to the Office for Internal Oversight Services, in compliance with General Assembly resolution 48/218 B, which would reflect the view of the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA, as requested by the Secretary-General.

Executive Board field visit to China

264. The representative of Zaire, team coordinator of the Executive Board field visit to China, undertaken from 5 to 18 February 1996, presented the mission report on the visit of the Executive Board. He expressed the team's gratitude to the Government and to all representatives of non-governmental organizations and individuals that the team had met while in China. He underlined the important contribution of the UNDP Resident Representative and the UNFPA Country

Representative to ensuring the success of the mission. Noting the conditions of poverty in the areas in the interior regions of China visited by the team, he encouraged the international community to join in efforts to achieve development in China.

265. The representative of China thanked the team for its report and in particular for its visit to the poverty-stricken areas of China. He stated that it had enhanced the understanding of both donors and recipients and would help to improve decision-making in the Executive Board. He invited the Executive Board to visit China again in a future field visit.

266. Several members of the team encouraged the Executive Board to review the report and comment on it. They emphasized the usefulness of the mission in helping Board members to understand the work of UNDP and UNFPA in a programme country. The findings could be applied to situations in other countries. Moreover, coming soon after the General Assembly's triennial policy review of operational activities, the mission had been timely as far as regarded the examination of coordination and the relationship of UNDP and UNFPA with the Bretton Woods institutions. The team found that both organizations played invaluable roles in China, which could not be substituted by other multilateral institutions or non-governmental organizations. It was vital that the reports of field visits garnered substantial feedback with adequate discussion in the Executive Board.

267. One delegation underlined that 100 per cent of China's programme was implemented by the Government. In response to a query from another delegation, it was explained that the term "parallel financing", mentioned in the report, referred to the tendency, given the difficulty of resource mobilization in China, for bilateral donors to have their own separate agendas. More information was sought on whether China had made efforts to achieve the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development. In response, one of the team members explained that that was a complex issue which could not be addressed adequately during the limited time available at the current session.

268. The Executive Board took note of the report on the field visit to China.

UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules

269. One delegation wished to bring to the notice of the Executive Board a matter regarding the 10 March 1995 communication sent to Governments regarding modifications to the Financial Regulations and Rules of UNDP. The provisions of the decisions of the Executive Board, the Governing Council and the General Assembly had now been incorporated. He wished to note for the record that Governing Council decision 92/36, dated 26 May 1992, had been omitted from those cited. He requested that the secretariat take the required measures to correct the Financial Regulations and Rules to incorporate the provisions of Governing Council decision 92/36.

UNDP communication and information programme

270. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/22. UNDP communication and information programme

The Executive Board

1. Reaffirms the importance of public information and advocacy measures to promote increased awareness and better understanding of the activities of the United Nations Development Programme;

2. Requests the Administrator in this context to take into consideration accessibility and the linguistic balances, including the development of the electronic dissemination of information;

3. Encourages the Administrator to present an information and publication policy, in the context of the mandate of the United Nations Development Programme and in consultation with the members of the Programme, so that account will be taken of the need to prioritize its publications with special attention to the risk of duplication with other publications of the United Nations and the financial and human constraints of the Programme;

4. Requests the Administrator to submit to the Executive Board prior to examination of the biennial budget estimates for 1998-1999, the policy document referred to in paragraph 3 above;

5. Further requests the Administrator to present in the document of the biennial budget estimates for 1998-1999 the detailed costs of publications and of their distribution.

29 March 1996

271. The Executive Board concluded its work by adopting the following decision:

96/24. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its second regular session 1996

The Executive Board

Recalls that during the second regular session 1996 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Approved the agenda and work plan for its second regular session 1996 (DP/1996/L.6 and Corr.1);

Approved the report of the first regular session 1996 (DP/1996/11);

Approved the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Annual session 1996: 6-17 May 1996 - Geneva

Third regular session 1996: 9-13 September 1996

First regular session 1997: 13-17 January 1997

Second regular session 1997: 10-14 March 1997

Annual session 1997: 5-16 May 1997 - New York

Third regular session 1997: 15-19 September 1997*

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* Subject to authorization by the General Assembly.

Agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the next two sessions as listed in the annex;

ITEM 2: UNFPA: STRATEGY FOR ALLOCATION OF UNFPA RESOURCES

Adopted decision 96/15 of 27 March 1996 on the allocation of resources to UNFPA country programmes;

ITEM 3: UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Adopted decision 96/13 of 26 March 1996 on the future country programming process of UNFPA;

Approved the UNFPA country programme for Cape Verde (DP/FPA/CP/153);

Approved the UNFPA country programme for Ghana (DP/FPA/CP/151);

Approved the UNFPA country programme for Chad (DP/FPA/CP/150);

Approved the extension of, and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme for the Congo (DP/FPA/1996/16);

Approved the UNFPA country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic (DP/FPA/CP/152);

Approved the extension of, and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme for Bolivia (DP/FPA/1996/12);

ITEM 4: UNFPA: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNFPA PUBLICATIONS PROGRAMME

Adopted decision 96/18 of 28 March 1996 on the UNFPA publications programme;

ITEM 5: UNFPA: ROLE OF UNFPA IN ASSESSING AND MEETING CONTRACEPTIVE REQUIREMENTS AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Adopted decision 96/14 of 26 March 1996 on the role of UNFPA in assessing and meeting contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs;

ITEM 6: UNFPA: MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNICEF/WHO JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY

Adopted decision 96/17 of 28 March 1996 on inter-agency coordination in health policy and programming;

ITEM 7: UNFPA/UNDP: HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

Took note of the oral report of the Administrator and the Executive Director on the harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts and the comments made thereon;

ITEM 8: UNFPA/UNDP: JOINT AND CO-SPONSORED UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

Adopted decision 96/16 of 28 March 1996 on the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS);

ITEM 9: UNDP: AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS

Adopted decision 96/23 of 29 March 1996 on agency support costs;

ITEM 10: UNDP: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Took note of the overview report on mid-term reviews (DP/1996/12) and the comments made thereon;

Took note of the mid-term review of the fourth country programme for Mozambique (DP/1996/12/Add.1);

Took note of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for the Lao People's Democratic Republic (DP/1996/12/Add.2);

Took note of the mid-term review of the first country programme for the Republic of Yemen (DP/1996/12/Add.3);

Took note of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Brazil (DP/1996/12/Add.4);

Took note of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Romania (DP/1996/12/Add.5);

Took note of the oral report on follow-up to Executive Board decision 96/11 on UNDP assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

ITEM 11: UNDP: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Adopted decision 96/21 of 29 March 1996 on UNDP financial, budgetary and administrative matters;

ITEM 12: UNDP: EVALUATION

Adopted decision 96/20 of 29 March 1996 on evaluation;

ITEM 13: UNDP: ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Adopted decision 96/19 of 29 March 1996 on UNDP assistance to the Palestinian people;

ITEM 14: OTHER MATTERS

Agreed to forego a decision on the draft report of the Secretary-General on enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and services at the current meeting and that the report of the Executive Board will reflect fully the statements made and the positions of all the members of the Board on the matter;

Adopted decision 96/22 of 29 March 1996 on UNDP communication and information programme;

Took note of the report on the field visit to China.

29 March 1996

Annex

ALLOCATION OF SUBJECTS FOR FUTURE SESSIONS

The following subjects are scheduled for consideration at future sessions:

Annual session (6-17 May 1996 - Geneva)

Item 1. Organizational matters

Item 2. Rules of procedure

UNFPA segment

Item 3. Report of the Executive Director and programme-level activities

Item 4. Mission statement of UNFPA

UNFPA/UNDP segment

Item 5. Reports to the Economic and Social Council

Item 6. Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts

UNDP segment

Item 7. Annual report of the Administrator and related matters (including Initiatives for change)

Item 8. Matters relating to the programming cycles:

- Implementation of the new programming arrangements: interim report

Item 9. Agency support costs

Item 10. United Nations Volunteers

Item 11. United Nations Development Fund for Women

Item 12. United Nations Office for Project Services

Item 13. Other matters

Third regular session (9-13 September 1996)

- Organizational matters

UNFPA segment

- Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

- Country programmes and related matters

UNFPA/UNDP segment

- Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts

- Reports on field visits

UNDP segment

- Matters relating to programming cycles: Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/23 and 95/26

- Country programmes and related matters

- Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

- United Nations Development Fund for Women

  - Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/18 and 95/32

- Report on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office

1997 sessions

First regular session 1997	13-17 January 1997
Second regular session 1997	10-14 March 1997
Annual session 1997	5-16 May 1997
Third regular session 1997	15-19 September 1997*

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* Subject to authorization by the General Assembly.